THE DUTY and REWARD OF BOUNTY TO THE POOR: IN A SERMON

Preached at the

SPITTAL

Upon *Wednesday* in *Easter* Week,
Anno Dom. MDCLXXI.

The Third Edition.

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UMI

252
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1680

To the Right Honourable

Sir *RICHARD FORD*,

Lord Mayor of *London*,

AND

The Court of Aldermen.

Right Honourable,

AS out of gratefull Reſpect I did (although otherwiſe indiſpoſed for ſuch Employments) endeavour to diſcharge that Service which You vouchſafed to call me unto, in conceiving and uttering theſe Meditations; ſo now, in publiſhing them, I do purely ſubmit to Your Commands, meaning therein to approve my ſelf,

Right Honourable,

Your moſt Obedient Servant,

Iſaac Barrow.

836034

Ford Mayor.

Martis ſecundo die *Maii*, 1671. Annoque Domini Regis Caroli Secundi *Angliæ*, &c. viceſimo tertio.

THIS Court doth deſire Dr. Barrow *to Print his Sermon Preached at the* Spittal *on* Wedneſday *in* Eaſter *Week laſt, with what farther he had prepared to deliver at that time.*

Avery.

IMPRIMATUR.

Julii 3. 1671. *Sam. Parker.*

A

SERMON

Preached at the

SPITTAL

UPON

Wedneſday in *Eaſter* Week,
Anno Domini 1671.

Pſal. cxii. 9.

He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor; his righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour.

AS this whole Pſalm appears to have a double intent; one to deſcribe the proper Affections and Actions of a truly Religious or Pious man; (of a man

Verſ. 1. *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his Commandments*;) the other to declare the Happineſs of ſuch a man's ſtate, conſequent upon thoſe his affections and actions, whether in way of natural reſult, or of gracious recompence from God: ſo doth this Verſe particularly contain both a good part of a pious man's character, and ſome conſiderable inſtances of his felicity. The firſt words (*He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor*) expreſs part of his Character; the latter (*His righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) aſſign inſtances of his Felicity. So that our Text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our Duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance thereof; for we are obliged to follow the Pious man's practice, and ſo doing we ſhall aſſuredly partake of his condition.

Theſe parts we ſhall in order proſecute, endeavouring (by God's aſſiſtence) ſomewhat to illuſtrate the words themſelves, to confirm the Truths couched in them, and to inculcate the Duties which they imply.

For the firſt part, *He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor*; theſe words in general do import the liberal Bounty and Mercy which a Pious man is wont to exerciſe; doing which, doth in good part conſtitute him pious, and ſignally declareth him ſuch; is a neceſſary ingredient of his Piety, and a conſpicuous mark thereof: But particularly they inſinuate ſome things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of thoſe Acts.

He hath diſperſed, he hath given. Thoſe words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is diſperſed and given by him, may be ſuppoſed to imply

a kind of universality in the matter of his Beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath within compass of his possession, or his
Luke 12. 33. power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, (the things which he hath,) and his
Luke 11. 41. τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may,) according to the prescriptions of our Lord in the Gospel. Every thing (I say) which he hath in substance, or can doe by his endeavour, that may conduce to the support of the life, or the health, or the welfare in any kind of his Neighbour, to the succour or relief of his indigency, to the removal or easement of his affliction, he may well here be understood to dispense and give. Feeding the Hungry, cloathing the Naked, visiting the Sick, entertaining the Stranger, ransoming the Captive, easing the Oppressed, comforting the Sorrowfull, assisting the Weak, instructing or advising the Ignorant, together with

with all ſuch kinds or inſtances of Beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good man's diſperſing and giving, or by juſt analogy of reaſon reducible thereto: Subſtantial Alms, as the moſt ſenſible and obvious matter of Bounty, was ('tis probable) eſpecially intended, but thence no manner of expreſſing it is to be excluded; for the ſame reaſons which oblige us, the ſame affections which diſpoſe us to beſtow our Money, or deal our Bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavour and advice, for the ſuſtenance and comfort of our poor Neighbour. Anſwerably, our Diſcourſe will more expreſly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our Goods; but it may be referred to all ſorts of Beneficence.

Farther, the word *diſperſed* intimateth the nature of his Boun-

ty,

ty, in excluſion of practices different from it. He *diſperſeth*, and is therefore not tenacious, doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them cloſe to himſelf, for the gratifying his covetous humour, or nouriſhing his pride, or pampering his ſenſuality; but ſendeth them abroad for the uſe and benefit of others. He *diſperſeth* his goods, and therefore alſo doth not fling them away altogether, as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or deſpiſed them; but fairly and ſoftly, with good conſideration he diſpoſeth of them here and there, as reaſon and need do require. He *diſperſeth* them *to the poor*, not diſſipateth them among vain or lewd perſons in wanton or wicked profuſions, in riotous exceſſes, in idle divertiſements, in expenſive curioſities, in hazardous gamings, in any ſuch courſes which ſwal-

ſwallow whole all that a man hath, or do ſo cripple him, that he becomes unable to diſperſe any thing: Our good man is to be underſtood wiſely provident, honeſtly induſtrious, and ſoberly frugal, that he may have wherewith to be juſt firſt, and then liberal.

Οὐ γὰρ δίον τε χρήματα ἔχειν μὴ ἐπιμελούμενον ὅπως ἔχῃ. Ariſt. *Eth.* 4. 1. Eph. 4. 28.

His *diſperſing* alſo (or *ſcattering*, ſo the * *Hebrew* word here uſed is otherwhere rendred: *There is* (ſaith the Wiſe man) *that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth*: where we may remark, that this word ſingly by it ſelf, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is uſed to ſignify this kind of practice. This his *diſperſing*, I ſay alſo) denotes the extent of the pious man's Bounty, that it is very large and diffuſive, and in a manner unreſtrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is withheld from no perſons within the verge of his power, and opportunity

* פזר Prov. 11. 24.

portunity to doe good. This practice commonly by a like phraſe (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed *ſowing*: 2 Cor. 9. 6, 10. *He* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall alſo reap ſparingly*; Gal. 6. 7, 8. Prov. 11. 18. *and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall alſo reap bountifully.* Now, he that ſoweth, having choſen a good ſoil, and a fit ſeaſon, doth not regard one particular ſpot, but throweth all about ſo much as his hand can hold, ſo far as the ſtrength of his arm doth carry. It is likewiſe called *watering*, (*He* Prov. 11. 25. *that watereth*, ſaith *Solomon*, *ſhall be watered himſelf*:) which expreſſion alſo ſeemeth to import a plentifull and promiſcuous effuſion of good, dropping in ſhowrs upon dry and parched places; that is, upon perſons dry for want, or parched with affliction. So the good man doth not plant his Bounty in one ſmall hole, or ſpout it on one narrow ſpot, but with an open hand diſſe-

diſſeminates it, with an impartial regard diſtils it all about. He ſtints it not to his own Family or Relations; to his Neighbours, or Friends, or Benefactors; to thoſe of his own Sect and Opinion, or of his humour and diſpoſition; to ſuch as ſerve him, or oblige him, or pleaſe him; whom ſome private intereſt ties, or ſome particular affection endears him to: but ſcatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all men that need it; toward meer Strangers, yea, toward known Enemies; toward ſuch who never did him any good, or can ever be able to doe any; yea, even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be preſumed ready to doe more. Nothing in his Neighbour but abſence of need, nothing in himſelf but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his Beneficence. In that προθυμία (that proclivity and promptitude of mind) which

Ἐὰν ἴδῃς τινὰ κακῶς πάσχοντα, μηδὲν περιεργάζου λοιπὸν· ἔχει τὸ δικαίωμα τῆς βοηθείας, τοῦ κακῶς παθεῖν αὐτόν. — τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστι, κἂν Ἕλλην ᾖ, κἂν Ἰουδαῖος. Chryſ. *in Heb. Orat.* 10.

S. *Paul*

2 Cor. 8. 12. *Ubicunque homo eſt, ibi beneficio locus eſt.* Sen. *de Vit. B. cap.* 24. Gal. 6. 10. 2 Cor. 9. 13.

S. *Paul* ſpeaketh of, he doeth good every-where: where-ever a man is, there is a room for his wiſhing well, and doing good, if he can: he obſerves that Rule of the Apoſtle, *As we have opportunity, let us doe good unto all men.* So the pious man hath *diſperſed.* It follows,

He hath given to the poor. Theſe words denote the Freeneſs of his Bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: He not onely lendeth (though he alſo doth that upon reaſonable occaſion; for, *A good man*, as it is Pſalm 112. 5. ſaid before in this Pſalm, *ſheweth mercy, and lendeth*; and other- Pſalm 37. 26. where, *The righteous is ever mercifull, and lendeth*: He, I ſay, not onely ſometimes willingly lendeth) to thoſe who in time may repay, or requite him; but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to thoſe from whom he can expect no retribution back. He doth

doth not (as good and pious; he doth not) preſent the Rich: to doe ſo is but a cleanly way of begging, or a ſubtle kind of trade; 'tis hardly Courteſie; 'tis ſurely no Bounty; for ſuch perſons (if they are not very ſordid or very careleſs, and ſuch men are not uſually much troubled with Preſents) will it is likely over-do him, or at leaſt will be even with him in kindneſs. In doing this, there is little vertue; for it, there will be ſmall reward. For, *If you doe good to them who doe good to you*, (or whom you conceive able and diſpoſed to requite you,) ποία χάρις, *what thanks* are due to you? for that (ſaith our Saviour) *even ſinners* (even men notoriouſly bad) *doe the ſame: And if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? for ſinners even lend to ſinners, to receive as much again.* All men commonly, the bad no leſs then the good,

Qui diviti donat, petit.

He that giveth to the rich ſhall ſurely come to want. *Prov.* 22. 16.

Luke 6. 33, 34.

Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων εὖ διδῷ, τί χρὴ φίλων; Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ὠφελεῖν θίλων.
Eurip. *in Orest.*
Τῶν εὐτυχούντων πάντες εἰσὶ συγγενεῖς.

good, are apt to be superfluously kind in heaping Favours on those whom Fortune befriends, and whose condition requires not their courtesie; every one almost is ready to adopt himself into the Kindred, or to scrue himself into the Friendship of the wealthy and prosperous: but where kindred is of use, there it is seldom found; it is commonly so deaf, as not to hear when it is call'd; so blind, as not to discern its proper object, and natural season; (*the time of adversity, for which a brother is born.*) Men disclaim alliance with the needy, and shun his acquaintance; so the Wise man observed, *All the brethren of the poor do hate him, how much more do his friends go far from him?* Thus it is in vulgar practice: but the Pious man is more judicious, more just, and more generous in the placing of his Favours; he is courteous to purpose, he is good to those who need.

Prov. 17. 17.

Prov. 19. 7, 4.
Εὖ πράσσε· τὰ φίλων δ' οὐδὲν, ἤν τις δυστυχῇ.
Eurip.

need. He, as ſuch, doth not make large entertainments *for his friends, his brethren, his kindred, his rich neighbours*; but obſerves that precept of our Lord, *When thou makeſt a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed: for they cannot recompenſe thee; thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the reſurrection of the juſt.* Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with a free heart and pure intention beſtoweth his goods on the indigent, without deſigning any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himſelf; except from God, in conſcience, reſpect and love to whom he doeth it.

Luke 14. 12, 13, 14.

It may be alſo material to obſerve the form of ſpeech here uſed, in reference to the time: *He hath diſperſed, and he hath given*; or, *He doth diſperſe, he doth give*, (for in the *Hebrew* Language the paſt and preſent times are not diſtinguiſhed:) which manner of ſpeaking

king may ſeem to intimate the reality, or the certainty, and the conſtancy of his practice in this kind; for what is paſt or preſent, we are infallibly ſecure of; and in Morals, what one is ſaid to have done, or to doe, is always underſtood according to habit, or cuſtom. It is not, *He will diſperſe, he will give*; that were no fit deſcription of a good man; to pretend to, would be no argument of Piety; thoſe words might import uncertainty, and delay in his practice: He that ſaith, *I will give*, may be fallacious in his profeſſions, may be inconſiſtent with his reſolutions, may wilfully or negligently let ſlip the due ſeaſon of performing it. Our good man is not a *Doſon*, or *Will-give*, (like that King of *Macedon*, who got that name from often ſignifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect;) he not onely purpoſes well, and promiſes fairly

Ἐπεκλήθη ὁ Δώσων ὡς ἐπαγγελτικὸς μέν, οὐ τελεσιουργὸς δὲ τῶν ὑποσχέσεων. Plut. *in Paulo Æmil.*

ly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perſeveres doing it upon every fit occaſion. He puts not his Neighbour into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuſes, ſaying to him, (as it is in the *Proverbs*) *Go and come again, and to morrow I will give, when he hath it by him:* he bids him not have patience, or ſays unto him, *Depart in peace*, when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient, when hunger or cold do then pinch him, when ſickneſs inceſſantly vexeth him, when preſent ſtreights and burthens oppreſs him: But he affordeth a ready, quick, and ſeaſonable relief. Prov. 3. 28. Jam. 2. 16.

He hath diſperſed, and *given*, while he lives, not reſerving the diſpoſal of all at once upon his death, or by his laſt Will; that unwilling Will, whereby men would ſeem to give ſomewhat, when they can keep nothing;

drawing to themſelves thoſe commendations and thanks, which are onely due to their Mortality; whenas were they immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is, *he hath freely diſperſed*, not an inevitable neceſſity will extort it from him[t]; it cannot be ſaid of him, that he never does well, but when he dies: So he hath done it really and ſurely.

Avarus, niſi cùm moritur, nil rectè facit. Laber.

He alſo doeth it conſtantly, through all the courſe of his life, whenever good opportunity preſents it ſelf. He doeth it not by fits, or by accident, according to unſtable cauſes or circumſtances moving him, (when bodily temper or humour inclineth him, when a ſad Object makes vehement impreſſion on him, when ſhame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others, when he may thereby promote ſome deſign, or procure ſome glory to himſelf) but his practice is con-

conſtant and uniform, being drawn from ſteady principles, and guided by certain rules; proceeding from reverence to God, and good will toward Man; following the clear dictates and the immutable laws of Conſcience. Thus hath the pious man *diſperſed*, and *given to the poor*: and let thus much ſuffice for explicatory reflection upon the firſt words.

The main drift and purport of which is, to repreſent the liberal exerciſing of Bounty and Mercy, to be the neceſſary duty, the ordinary practice, and the proper character of a truly Pious man; ſo that performing ſuch acts, is a good ſign of true Piety; and omitting them, is a certain argument of ungodlineſs. For the demonſtration of which Points, and for exciting us to a practice anſwerable, I ſhall propound ſeveral Conſiderations, whereby the plain reaſonableneſs, the great weight, the

high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its ſtrict connexion with other principal duties of Piety, will appear. And firſt, I will ſhew with what advantage the Holy Scripture repreſents it to us, or preſſes it upon us.

I. Head of diſcourſe. 1. We may conſider, that there is no ſort of Duties which God hath more expreſly commanded, or more earneſtly inculcated, then theſe of Bounty and Mercy toward our Brethren; whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in God's eſteem may be inferred. Even in the ancient Law, we may obſerve very carefull proviſions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency preſcribed.

Deut. 15. 7, *Thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thine hand from thy poor brother.*

Verſ. 11. — *Thou ſhalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, unto thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.* So did

did *Moſes*, in God's name, with language very ſignificant and emphatical, enjoyn to the children of *Iſrael*. The holy Prophets alſo do commonly with an eſpecial heat and vigour preſs theſe Duties, moſt ſmartly reproving the tranſgreſſion or neglect of them; eſpecially when they reclaim men from their wicked courſes, urging them ſeriouſly to return unto God and Goodneſs, they propoſe this practice as a ſingular inſtance moſt expreſſive of their Converſion, moſt apt to appeaſe God's wrath, moſt effectual to the recovery of his favour. *Waſh you*, (ſaith God in *Eſay*) *make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to doe evil, learn to doe well.* So in general he exhorts to Repentance: then immediately he ſubjoyns theſe choice inſtances thereof: *Seek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow.*

Eſay 1. 16, 17, 18. Jer. 7. 5, 6.

widow.— *Come now*, (then he adds) *let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* When *Daniel* would prescribe to King *Nebuchadnezzar* the best way of amendment, and the surest means of averting God's Judgments impendent on him, he thus speaks: *Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee;* * *break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor.* This he cull'd out as of all pious acts chiefly gratefull to God, and clearly testifying Repentance; and, *so very impious a person was Alms able to justify*, says the Father thereupon. So also when God himself would declare what those acts are which render penitential devotions most agreeable to him, and most effectual, he thus expresseth his mind: *Is not this the fast which*

Dan. 4. 27.

* Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι· so the LXX render those words, reading, it seems פרת for פרק.

Ναβουχοδονόσορ, τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀσεβῆ, ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη δικαιῶσαι. Athan. *ad Antioch Quæst.* 87. Isa. 58. 6, 7.

which I have choſen? to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoak? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out to thine houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh? Of ſo great conſideration and moment was this ſort of Duties, even under that old diſpenſation of weakneſs, ſervility and fear; ſo much tenderneſs of compaſſion and benignity did God exact even from that hard-hearted and worldly people, who were ſo little capable of the beſt Rules, and had encouragements, in compariſon, ſo mean toward performances of this nature. The ſame we may well conceive, under the more perfect diſcipline of univerſal amity, of ingenuity, of ſpiritual Grace and Goodneſs, in a higher ſtrain, with more

more force and greater obligation to be impoſed on us, who have ſo much ſtronger engagements, and immenſly-greater encouragements to them. And ſo indeed it is: for thoſe Precepts delivered by our Lord, *Sell all that you have, and give Alms*; *If thou wilt be perfect, ſell all that thou haſt, and give to the poor*; *Give to every man that asketh thee*; *Treaſure not up to your ſelves treaſures upon the earth*, do indeed ſound high, but are not inſignificant, or impertinent. They cannot ſignify or deſign leſs, then that we ſhould be always in affection, and diſpoſition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the ſuccour of our poor brethren; that to the utmoſt of our ability, (according to moral eſtimation prudently rated,) upon all occaſions we ſhould really expreſs that diſpoſition in our practice; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exerciſe of theſe

Luke 12. 33. 6. 30. 11. 41. Matt. 19. 21. 6. 19.

theſe Duties in a very eminent degree. Theſe indeed were the Duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his diſcourſe commend and preſcribe, ſo he did moſt ſignally exemplify in his practice; his whole Life being in effect but one continual act of moſt liberal Bounty and Mercy toward Mankind; in charity to whom, he out-did his own ſevereſt Rules, being content never to poſſeſs any wealth, never to enjoy any eaſe in this world. And therein (both as to doctrine and practice) did the holy Apoſtles cloſely follow their Maſter: *As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things.* So they throughly in deeds practiſed theſe duties, which in words they taught, and earneſtly preſſed; admoniſhing their Converts to (*a*) *diſtribute to the neceſſities of the Saints*, to (*b*) *doe good to all men*; (*c*) *to doe good, and to communicate not to forget*; to

2 Cor. 8. 10.

a Rom. 12. 13.
b Gal. 6. 10.
c Heb. 13. 16.

to *ſhew mercy with chearfulneſs*, to
Coloſ. 3. 12. (*d*) *put on bowels of mercy*; to
Eph. 4. 32. (*e*) *be kind, and tender-hearted one toward another*; to *abound in*
2 Cor. 8. 7. *the grace of liberality*. Such are their Directions and Injunctions to all Chriſtian people; ſo did they preach themſelves, and ſo they enjoyned others to preach. *Charge*
1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. *the rich in this world*, (ſaith S. *Paul* to his Scholar *Timothy*) *that they doe good*; *that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing*
Tit. 3. 8. *to communicate*: and, *Theſe things* (ſaith he likewiſe adviſing Biſhop *Titus*) *I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which believe in God may be carefull to maintain good works*: what *good works* he meaneth, the reaſon adjoyned doth ſhew; *For theſe things* (ſaith he) *are good and profitable unto men.*

2. It is indeed obſervable, that as in every kind that which is moſt excellent doth commonly aſſume to it ſelf the name of the whole kind;

kind; ſo among the parts of Righteouſneſs, (which word is uſed to comprehend all Vertue and Goodneſs) this of exerciſing Bounty and Mercy is peculiarly called *Righteouſneſs*; ſo that *Righteouſneſs* and *Mercifulneß*, (or *Alms-deeds*) the righteous and bountifull perſon, are in Scripture-expreſſion ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undiſtinguiſhably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to Righteouſneſs, and rewards promiſed to righteous perſons, hard to diſcern, whether the general obſervance of God's Law, or the ſpecial practice of theſe Duties, are concerned in them. Likewiſe works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed *good works*; and to perform them is uſually ſtyled *to doe good*, and *to doe well*; ((*a*) ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, (*b*) καλὸν ποιεῖν, (*c*) ἀγαθοεργεῖν, (*d*) ἀγαθοποιεῖν, (*e*) εὐποιεῖν, (*f*) εὐεργετεῖν, are words ap-

a Act. 9. 36. 1 Tim. 5. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Tit. 3. 8, 14. 2 Cor. 9. 8. Gal. 6. *b* 9. *c* 10. *d* Luke 6. 35. *e* Heb. 13. 16. *f* Act. 10. 38.

applied to this purpose) which manners of expression do argue the eminent dignity of these performances.

3. We may also consequently mark, that in those places of Scripture where the Divine Law is abridged, and Religion summ'd up into a few particulars of main importance, these Duties constantly make a part: so when the Prophet *Micah* briefly reckons up those things which are best in the Law, and chiefly required by God, the whole Catalogue of them consisting but of three particulars, *Mercy* comes in for one; *He hath shewed thee, O man,* (saith he) *what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to doe justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Likewise of those (βαρύτερα τῦ νόμυ, those) more substantial and *weighty things of God's Law*, the neglect of which our Saviour objecteth as

Micah 6. 8.

an

an argument of impiety, and a cauſe of wo, to thoſe pretending Zelots, this is one: *Wo unto you, Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites; for ye pay tythe of Mint and Cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.* The ſum of S. *John* the Baptiſt his inſtruction of the people is by S. *Luke* reduced to this Point; *The people asked him, ſaying, What ſhall we doe?* He anſwering, ſaith unto them, *He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him doe likewiſe.* S. *James* his Syſtem of Religion is this; *Pure and undefiled Religion before God and the Father is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and widow in their affliction,* (that is, to comfort and relieve all diſtreſſed and helpleſs perſons,) *and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.* S. *Paul* ſeems to be yet more compendious and cloſe: *Bear ye* (ſaith he)

Matt. 23. 23.

Luke 3. 10, 11.

Jam. 1. 27.

Gal. 6. 2.

he) *one another's burthens, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt.* Yea, God himſelf compriſeth all the ſubſtantial part of Religion herein, when, comparing it with the circumſtantial part, he ſaith, *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice.*

Hoſ. 6. 6.

4. It is in like manner conſiderable, that in the general deſcriptions of Piety and Goodneſs, the practice of theſe Duties is ſpecified, as a grand ingredient of them. In this *Pſalm*, where ſuch a deſcription is intended, it is almoſt the onely particular inſtance; and it is not onely mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expreſſion. In the 37. *Pſalm* it is affirmed, and repeated, that *The righteous ſheweth mercy; he ſheweth mercy, and giveth; he ſheweth mercy, and lendeth.* In the *Proverbs*, 'tis a commendation of the vertuous woman, *whoſe price is far above rubies*, that *She ſtretcheth out*

Pſalm 37. 21, 26.

The righteous giveth, and ſpareth not. *Prov.* 21. 26.

Prov. 31. 20.

out her hand to the poor, yea ſtretcheth forth both her hands to the needy. And in *Ezekiel* (which is eſpecially remarkable) the 18. Chapter, where the principal things conſtituting a pious man are, more then once, profeſſedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expreſſed, and taketh up much room in the accompt; of ſuch a perſon (who *ſhall ſurely live, and not die,* that is, who certainly ſhall abide in God's favour, and enjoy the happy conſequences thereof) it is ſuppoſed, that he *neither hath oppreſſed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath ſpoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, and hath taken off his hand from the poor.* Ezek. 18. 7, 16.

5. Alſo in the particular Hiſtories of good men this ſort of practice is ſpecially taken notice of, and expreſſed in their characters.

Heb. 13. 2. In the ſtory of our Father *Abraham*, his benignity to ſtrangers, and hoſpitableneſs, is remarkable among all his deeds of goodneſs, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice. In this the Conſcience of *Job* did ſolace it ſelf, as in a ſolid aſſurance of his integrity:

Job 29. 12, 13, 15. *I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him. The bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me, and I cauſed the widow's heart to ſing. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame;*

Job 30. 25. *I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my ſoul grieved for the poor?* Hence alſo did the good Publican recommend himſelf to the favour and approbation of our Saviour,

Luke 19. 8, 9. ſaying, *Behold*, Lord, *half of my goods I give to the poor*; hence did *ſalvation come to* his *houſe*: hence he is proclaimed *a ſon of Abraham.*

Abraham. Of *Dorcas*, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the Disciples, this is the commendation and character; *She was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did:* such practice made her capable of that favour, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life; at least in S. *Chrysostom's* judgment: *The force of her alms,* saith he, *did conquer the tyranny of death. Cornelius* also, that excellent person, who was, though a *Gentile*, so acceptable to God, and had so extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus represented; *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.* We may add, that to be hospitable (one branch of these duties, and inferring the rest) is reckoned a qualification of those who are to be the Guides and Patterns of goodness unto others.

Acts 9. 36.

Ἡ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης δύναμις ἐνίκησε δανάτου τὸ τυραννίδα. Chrys. *in Gen. Orat.* 55.

Acts 10. 2.

1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 1. 8.

And particularly, one fit to be promoted to a widow's office in the Church is thus described: *well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work.*

1 Tim. 5. 10.

6. So near to the heart of Piety doth the Holy Scripture lay the practice of these Duties: and no wonder; for it often expressly declares Charity to be the fulfilling of God's Law, as the best expression of all our duty toward God, (of faith in him, love and reverence of him,) and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our Neighbour. And of Charity, works of Bounty and Mercy are both the chief instances, and the plainest signs: for whereas all Charity doth consist either in mental desire, or in verbal signification,

Gal. 5. 14. Rom. 13. 9, 10. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Matt. 7. 12.

or

or in effectual performance of good to our Neighbour; this laſt is the end, the completion, and the aſſurance of the reſt. Good will is indeed the root of Charity; but that lies under-ground, and out of ſight; nor can we conclude its being or life without viſible fruits of beneficence. Good words are at beſt but fair leaves thereof, ſuch as may (and too often do) proceed from a weak and barren diſpoſition of mind. But theſe *good works* are *real fruits*, (ſo S. *Paul* calls them; *Let ours alſo*, ſaith he, *learn to maintain good works for neceſſary uſes, that they be not unfruitfull*) which declare a true life, and a good ſtrength of charity in the bearer of them: by them τὸ γνήσιον τῆς ἀγάπης, *the ſincerity* (or genuineneſs) *of our charity is proved*. For as no man ever doth impreſs a falſe ſtamp on the fineſt metall; ſo coſtly charity is ſeldom counterfeit. It is to decline ſpen-

Ἐπίτασις ἀγάπης ὁ ζῆλος. Greg. Nyſſ. *in Matt.* 5. 7.

Tit. 3. 14. Rom. 15. 28. Phil. 4. 17.

2 Cor. 8. 8.

ding their goods, or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wiſhing well, the defect of doing ſo, and paying words in ſtead of things: But he that freely imparts what he hath, or can doe for his Neighbour's good, needs no other argument to evince that he loves in good earneſt, nor can indeed well uſe any other: for words, if actions are wanting, ſeem abuſive; and if actions are preſent, they are ſuperfluous. Wherefore S. *John* thus
1 John 3. 18. adviſes; *My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue,* (ἀλλ' ἔργῳ) *but in work and in truth.* To love in *work*, and to love in *truth*, he ſignifies to be the ſame thing; and to pretend love in ſpeech, without practiſing it in deed, he implies not allowable. And S. *James* in way of compariſon ſays, that as faith without works is dead, ſo love without beneficence is uſeleſs. For, *If a brother*

ther or ſiſter be naked, and deſti- Jam. 2. 15,
tute of daily food, and one of you 16, 17.
ſay unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needfull to the body, what doth it profit? Even ſo faith without works is dead. Cold wiſhes of good, working no real benefit to our Neighbour, and a faint aſſent unto truth, producing no conſtant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or uſe. Charity then being the main point of Religion, Mercy and Bounty being the chief parts of Charity, well may theſe duties be placed in ſo high a rank, according to the divine Heraldry of Scripture.

7. To enforce which Obſervations, and that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of theſe Duties, we may conſider, that to the obſervance of them moſt ample and excellent

rewards are assigned; that in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best mercies and blessings to us. The best of all
Psalm 63. 3. good things, (that which in *David's* opinion was better then life it self,) the fountain of all blessings (God's love and favour, or mercy) is procured thereby, or is
2 Cor. 9. 7. annexed to it. For, *God loveth a chearfull giver,* saith S. *Paul*; and,
Matt. 5. 7. *The mercifull shall obtain mercy,*
Jam. 2. 13. saith our Saviour; and, *Mercy rejoyceth against judgment,* (or boasteth, and triumpheth over it; ἔλεος κατακαυχᾶται κρίσεως· that is, it appeaseth God's wrath, and prevents our condemnation and
Matt. 6. 14. punishment,) saith S. *James*; God will not continue displeased with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and mercifull to his Neighbour. 'Tis true, if rightly understood, what the *Hebrew* Wise man saith, *Water will*

will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement of ſins. For this practice hath the nature and name of a Sacrifice, and is declared, as ſuch, both in excellency and efficacy to ſurpaſs all other Sacrifices; to be moſt acceptable to God, moſt available for expiation of guilt, moſt effectual in obtaining mercy and favour. Other Sacrifices performed in obedience to God's appointment (on virtue of our Lord's perfect obedience, and with regard to his pure Sacrifice of himſelf) did in their way propitiate God, and atone ſin; but this hath an intrinſick worth, and a natural aptitude to thoſe purpoſes. Other Oblations did ſignify a willingneſs to render a due homage to God; this really and immediately performs it. They were ſhadows or images well reſembling that duty, (parting with any thing we have for the ſake of God, and for purchaſing his favour,)

Ecclus. 3. 39. *Si nudum veſtias, teipſum induis juſtitiam.* Ambr. *Offic.* 1. 11. Hier. *in Pſalm.* 133.

Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *Orat.* 55.

vour,) whereof this is the body and ſubſtance. This is therefore preferr'd as in it ſelf excelling the reſt, and more eſtimable in God's ſight; ſo that in compariſon or competition therewith, the other ſeem to be ſlighted and rejected.

Hoſ. 6. 6. *I will* (ſaith God) *have mercy,*
Micah 6. 7. *and not ſacrifice:* and, *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oyl?* Will he? that is, he will not be pleaſed with ſuch ſacrifices, if they be abſtracted from the more delightfull ſacrifices of bounty and mercy. God never made an exception againſt theſe, or derogated from them in any caſe; they abſolutely and perpetually are

Phil. 4. 18. (as S. *Paul* ſpeaketh) *Odours of a ſweet ſmell, ſacrifices acceptable and well-pleaſing to God.* And the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* ſeconds

Heb. 13. 16. him: *To doe good*, ſaith he, *and to communicate, forget not; for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed.*

ſed. By theſe, all other works and all enjoyments are ſanctified; for, *Give alms* (ſaith our Lord) *of what you have, and behold all things are pure unto you.* Such charitable perſons are therefore frequently pronounced bleſſed, that is in effect inſtated in a confluence of all good things. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor,* ſays the Pſalmiſt; and, *He that hath a bountifull eye, is bleſſed,* ſaith *Solomon*; and, *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he,* ſaith the Wiſe man again; and, *Bleſſed are the mercifull,* ſaith our Lord himſelf. So in groſs and generally. Particularly alſo, and in retail, the greateſt bleſſings are expreſly allotted to this practice: proſperity in all our affairs is promiſed thereto. *Thou* (ſaith *Moſes*) *ſhalt ſurely give thy poor brother, and thine heart ſhall not be grieved that thou giveſt unto him; becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy*

Luke 11. 41. Pſalm 41. 1. Prov. 22. 9. Prov. 14. 21. Matt. 5. 7. Deut. 15. 10.

thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto. Stability in a good condition is ordinarily conſequent thereon: ſo the Prophet *Daniel* implies, when, adviſing King *Nebuchadnezzar* to theſe works, he
Dan. 4. 27. adds, *If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* Deliverance from evil incumbent, protection in imminent danger, and ſupport in afflictions, are the ſure rewards thereof: ſo the *Pſalmiſt* aſſures us;
Pſal. 41. 1, &c. *Bleſſed* (ſaith he) *is he that conſidereth the poor: The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing; thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs.* Security from all want is likewiſe a recompence proper
Prov. 28. 27. thereto: for, *He that giveth to the*

the poor ſhall not lack, ſaith the Wiſe man. *If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul, then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity*, &c. Thriving in wealth and eſtate is another ſpecial reward: for, *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat*; the ſame Authour gives us his word for it. Even of the good things here below, to thoſe who for his ſake in this or any other way do *let go houſes or lands*, our Lord promiſeth the return of *a hundred-fold*, either in kind, or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practice even in relation to the concernments of this tranſitory life: but to them beſide God hath deſtinated rewards incomparably more conſiderable and precious, ſpiritual and eternal rewards, treaſures of heavenly wealth, crowns of endleſs glory, the perfection of joy and bliſs to be diſpenſed *at the reſurrection of the juſt*. *He that for my*

Iſa. 58. 10, 11, 12.

Prov. 11. 25.

Matt. 19. 29.

Luke 14. 14. Matt. 19. 29. Mark 10. 29, 30.

my ſake hath left houſes or lands, ſhall receive a hundred-fold now at this time, (or in this preſent life,) *and in the world to come ſhall inherit everlaſting life*: ſo infallible Truth hath aſſured us. They who perform theſe duties are ſaid to
Luke 12. 33. *make themſelves bags, which wax not old, a treaſure that faileth not*
Luke 16. 9. *in the heavens*; to *make themſelves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who, when they fail*, (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth,) *will receive them into*
1 Tim. 6. 19. *everlaſting habitations*; to *lay up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*: Such rewards are promiſed to the obſervers.

8. And correſpondently grievous puniſhments are deſigned and denounced to the tranſgreſſours of theſe Duties; the worſt of miſeries is their portion and doom: they, for being ſuch, do forfeit God's

God's love and favour; they loſe his bleſſing and protection; they can have no ſure poſſeſſion, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their eſtate; for, *He* (ſaith S. *James*) *ſhall have judgment without mercy, who ſheweth no mercy.* And of ſuch a perſon it is ſaid in *Job*, *That which he laboureth for he ſhall reſtore, and ſhall not ſwallow it down: according to his ſubſtance ſhall the reſtitution be, and he ſhall not rejoyce therein; becauſe he hath oppreſſed, and forſaken the poor.* (Not onely becauſe he hath unjuſtly oppreſſed, but becauſe he hath uncharitably forſaken the poor.) If by the Divine forbearance ſuch perſons do ſeem to enjoy a fair *portion in this life*, (*proſpering in the world, and increaſing in riches,*) they will find a ſad reckoning behind in the other world: this will be the reſult of that Audit; *Wo be unto you, rich men, for you have received your conſolation*; (ſuch rich men are meant, who have

Jam. 2. 13.

Job 20. 18, 19.

Pſal. 17. 14.
Pſal. 73. 12.

Luke 6. 24.

have got, or kept, or uſed their wealth baſely; who have detained all the conſolation it yields to themſelves, and imparted none to others;) and, *Remember, ſon, thou didſt receive thy good things in this life*; (ſo didſt receive them, as to ſwallow them, and ſpend them here, without any proviſion or regard for the future in the uſe of them;) and, *Caſt that unprofitable ſervant* (who made no good uſe of his Talent) *into utter darkneſs*. Such will be the fate of *every one that treaſures up to himſelf, and is not rich unto God*; not rich in Piety and Charity, not rich in performing for God's ſake works of Bounty and Mercy.

Luke 16. 25.

Matt. 25. 30.

Luke 12. 21.

9. It is indeed moſt conſiderable, that at the final reckoning, when all mens actions ſhall be ſtrictly ſcann'd, and juſtly ſentenced according to their true deſert, a ſpecial regard will be had to the diſcharge or neglect of theſe Duties.

ties. It is the bountifull and mercifull perſons, who have relieved *Chriſt* in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the ſheep at the right hand, and ſhall hear the good Shepherd's voide uttering thoſe joyfull words, *Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, enter into the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me.* He doth not ſay, Becauſe you have made goodly profeſſions, becauſe you have been Orthodox in your opinions, becauſe you have frequented religious Exerciſes, (have prayed often and long, have kept many Faſts, and heard many Sermons,) becauſe you have been ſtaunch in your converſations, be- Matt. 25. 34, &c.

cauſe you have been punctual in your dealings, becauſe you have maintained a ſpecious guiſe of piety, ſobriety, and juſtice; (although, indeed, he that will come off well at that great Trial, muſt be reſponſible, and able to yield a good accompt in reſpect to all thoſe particulars;) but, Becauſe you have been charitably benign and helpfull to perſons in need and diſtreſs, therefore bleſſed are you, therefore enter into the Kingdom of glorious bliſs prepared for ſuch perſons. This proceeding more then intimates, that in the judgment of our Lord no ſort of vertue or good practice is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty; or rather that, in his eſteem, none is equal thereto: ſo that if the queſtion were put to him, which is one of them to *Antiochus*, (in *Athanaſius* his works,) Which is the moſt eminent Vertue? our Lord would reſolve it no otherwiſe then is done by

Athanaſius *Tom.* 2.

by that Father, affirming, that Mercifulneſs is the Queen of Vertues; for that, at the final accompt, the examination chiefly proceeds upon that; it is made the ſpecial Touchſtone of Piety, and the peculiar ground of Happineſs. On the other ſide, thoſe who have been deficient in theſe performances (uncharitable and unmercifull perſons) will at the laſt Trial appear to be the wretched Goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable ſpeech ſhall by the great Judge be pronounced, *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not.* It is not, we may ſee, for having done that which in this world is called rapine or wrong, Matt. 25. 41, &c.

Οὐκ ὅτι διηρπάκασιν, οὐδ' ὅτι σεσυλήκασιν, οὐ μεμοιχεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων πεποιήκασιν, ταύτην τὴν τάξιν κατακριθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ Χριστὸν διὰ τῶν δεομένων τεθεραπεύκασιν. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 16.

for having pillaged or couzened their Neighbour, for having committed Adultery or Murther, or any other thing prohibited, that these unhappy men are said to be formerly impeached, and finally condemned to that miserable doom; but for having been unkind and unmercifull to their poor brethren: this, at that high Tribunal, will pass for a most enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is that they shall be cursed, and cast down into a wretched consortship with those malicious and merciless Fiends, unto whose disposition they did so nearly approach.

Thus it appears how mighty a stress God in the holy Scripture doth lay upon these Duties, so peremptorily commanding them, so vehemently pressing them, so highly commending them, so graciously by promises alluring us to the performance, so dreadfully by threat-

threatnings deterring us from the neglect of them. What an affront then will it be to God's Authority, what a diſtruſt to his Word, what a contempt of his Power, his Juſtice, his Wiſedom, what a deſpight to his Goodneſs and Mercy, if, notwithſtanding all theſe Declarations of his will and purpoſes, we ſhall preſume to be uncharitable in this kind? There are alſo Conſiderations (very many, very clear, and very ſtrong) which diſcover the great reaſonableneſs and equity of theſe Laws, with our indiſpenſable obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact theſe duties from us, and do more earneſtly plead in the poor man's behalf, then he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down upon our poor Neighbour, if we reflect upon our ſelves, or conſider our wealth it ſelf, every-where we may diſcern various reaſons

obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practice of these Duties.

In regard to God.

II. Head of Discourse. 1. We may consider, that by exercising of Bounty and Mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himself; by neglecting those duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himself. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently professeth himself their especial Friend, Patron, and Protectour; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his Providence with their support. In effect therefore they shall surely be provided for, one way or other;

Psal. 22. 26. (*The poor shall eat and be satisfied;*
18. 27. *God will save the afflicted people;*
146. 9. *The Lord preserveth the strangers,*

he

he relieveth the fatherleſs and widow. When the poor and needy Iſa. 41. 17.
ſeek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirſt, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Iſrael will not forſake them:) But out of goodneſs to us, he chuſeth, (if it may be, we freely concurring therein,) and beſt liketh, that it ſhould be done by our hands; this conducing no leſs to our benefit, then to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to ſhew our reſpect to himſelf, and to lay an engagement on him to doe us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own Name, and alloweth him to crave our ſuccour for his ſake. (When the poor man asketh us in God's name, or for God's ſake, he doth not uſurp or forge, he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing ſo:) God gives him credit from himſelf unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his

own accompt; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtour; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to satisfy us.

Prov. 19. 17. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*, saith the Wise man: and,

Matt. 25. 40, 45. *Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me*, saith our Saviour: and,

Heb. 6. 10. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his Name, in that ye have ministred to the Saints, and do minister*, saith the Apostle. What therefore we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expression of kindness to himself, being given to one of his friends and clients, in respect to him; he regards it as a testimony of friendly confidence in him, signifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and

and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods ſafe enough in his cuſtody. But if we ſtop our ears, or ſhut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harſh repulſe, and an hainous affront put upon himſelf: we doing it to one who bears his Name, and wears his Livery, (for the poor man's rags are badges of his relation unto God,) he thereby judges, that we have little good will, little reſpect, little compaſſion toward himſelf: ſince we vouchſafe not to grant him ſo mean a favour, ſince we refuſe at his requeſt, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a ſmall ſum, he juſtly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have ſorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good Correſpondent, little valuing his word, ſuſpecting his goodneſs, his truth, or his ſufficiency.

2. We

2. We by practiſing thoſe Duties are juſt, by omitting them are very unjuſt toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our eſtate, are indeed none of them ſimply or properly our own, ſo that we have an abſolute property in them, or an entire diſpoſal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of ſuch a right unto them, or power over them: God neceſſarily is the true and abſolute Proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God; but we muſt not underſtand that God, by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them: they are depoſited with us in truſt, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as Stewards, not transferred upon us as Maſters: they are ſo ours, that we have no authority to uſe them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to God's direction and order. He by right immutable is Lord paramount of all

Eccles. 5. 19. 6. 2.

all his Creation; every thing unalienably belongs to him upon many accompts. He out of nothing made all things at firſt, and to every Creature through each moment a new being is conferr'd by his preſervative influence: originally therefore he is Lord of all things, and continually a new title of Dominion over every thing ſpringeth up unto him: it is his always, becauſe he always maketh it. We our ſelves are naturally meer Slaves and Vaſſals to him: as we can never be our own, (Maſters of our ſelves, of our lives, of our liberties,) ſo cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no poſſible means by which we can acquire any abſolute title to the leaſt mite; the principal right to what we ſeem to get, according to all Law and Reaſon, accrueth to our Maſter. All things about us, by which we live, with which we

Psalm 24. 1. 50. 12. 89. 11. 95. 5. we work and trade, the Earth which supports and feeds us, and furnisheth us with all commodities, the Air we breathe, the Sun and Stars which cherish our life, are all of them his, his Productions, and his Possessions, subsisting by his pleasure, subject to his disposal. How then can any thing be ours? How can we say with

1 Sam. 25. 11. the foolish Churl *Nabal, Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, and give it?* Thine? O inconsiderate man! How cam'st thou by it? how dost thou hold it? Didst thou make it? or dost thou preserve it? Canst thou claim any thing by Nature? No, thou broughtest nothing with thee into the world, thou didst not bring thy self hither. Canst thou challenge any thing to thy self from Chance? No, for there is no such thing as Chance, all things being guided and governed by God's Providence. Dost thou conceive thy In-

Sed ais, Quid injustum est, si cùm aliena non invadam, propria diligentiùs servem? O impudens dictum! propria dicis? quæ? ex quibus reconditis in hunc mundum detulisti? Ambros.

Induſtry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art miſtaken, for all the wit and ſtrength thou appli-eſt, the head thou contriveſt with, and the hands thou workeſt with, are God's; all the ſucceſs thou findeſt did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labours would be fruitleſs, did not he aſſiſt and bleſs thee. Thou doſt vainly and falſly *lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, when-as thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy ſilver and gold is multi-plied, and all that thou haſt is mul-tiplied; if thou ſayeſt in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou muſt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.* [*—Who am I,* (ſaith *David*) *and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee; and of thine*

Deut. 8. 13, 14, 17, 18.

thine own have we given thee, 1 Chron. 29. 14.] Since then upon all ſcores every thing we have doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recall or reſume whatever he pleaſeth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot juſtly uſe it otherwiſe then he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwiſe then to his intereſt and ſervice. God then having enjoyned, that after we have ſatisfied our neceſſities, and ſupplied our reaſonable occaſions, we ſhould employ the reſt to the relief of our poor Neighbours; that * *if we have two coats*, (one more then we need) *we ſhould impart one to him that hath none*; *if we have meat* abundant, that we *likewiſe* communicate to him that wants it: God by the poor man's voice (or by his need and miſery) demanding his own from us, we are very unjuſt if we preſume to withhold it; doubly unjuſt we are, both

Aliena rapere convincitur, qui ultra neceſſaria ſibi retinere probatur. Hieron.

Quicquid Deus pluſquam opus eſt dederit, non nobis ſpecialiter dedit, ſed per nos aliis erogandum tranſmiſit; quod ſi non dederimus, res alienas invaſimus. Aug. *Serm.* 219. *de Temp.*

* Luke 3. 11.

Proprium nemo dicat quod commune; plus quam ſufficeret ſumptui violenter obtentum eſt. Ambroſ.

both toward God, and toward our Neighbour: we are unfaithfull Stewards, misapplying the goods of our Master, and crossing his order: we are wrongfull Usurpers, detaining from our Neighbour that which God hath allotted him: we are in the Court of Conscience, we shall appear at the Bar of God's Judgment no better then Robbers, (under vizards of legal right and possession) spoiling our poor Brother of his goods; his, I say, by the very same title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expressed, as we have seen, in his holy Word. (He cannot take it away by violence or surreption against our will, but we are bound willingly to yield it up to him: to doe that, were disorder in him; to refuse this, is wrong in us.) * 'Tis the hungry man's bread which we hoard up in our barns, 'tis his meat on which we glut, and

Σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἀποστερητὴς, ἃ πρὸς οἰκονομίαν ἐδόξας, ταῦτα ἴδια σεαυτῷ ποιεῖς; Bas. M.

* *Nostrum est (pauperes clamant) quod effunditis; nobis crudeliter subtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditur.* Bern. *Ep.* 42.

and his drink which we guzzle. 'Tis the naked man's apparel which we ſhut up in our preſſes, or which we exorbitantly ruffle and flaunt in: 'tis the needy perſon's gold and ſilver which we cloſely hide in our cheſts, or ſpend idly, or put out to uſeleſs uſe. We are in thus holding, or thus ſpending, truly πλεονέκται, not onely covetous, but wrongfull, or havers of more then our own, againſt the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of *Solomon, Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to doe it.* If we are ambitious of having a property in ſomewhat, or affect to call any thing our own, 'tis onely by nobly giving that we can accompliſh our deſire; that will certainly appropriate our goods to our uſe and benefit: but from baſely keeping, or vainly embezelling them, they become not our poſſeſſion and enjoyment,

Prov. 3. 27.

Omne quod malè poſſidetur alienum eſt; malè autem poſſidet, qui malè utitur. Auguſt. *Ep.* 54.

joyment, but our theft and our bane. (Theſe things, ſpoken after the holy Fathers, wiſe Inſtructors in matters of Piety, are to be underſtood with reaſonable temperament, and practiſed with honeſt prudence. I cannot ſtand to diſcuſs caſes, and remove ſcruples; a pious Charity will eaſily diſcern its due limits and meaſures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty. The ſum is, that juſtice towards God and man obligeth us, not to ſuffer our poor Brother to periſh, or pine away for want, when we ſurfeit and ſwim in plenty, or not to ſee him lack neceſſaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

3. Shewing Bounty and Mercy are the moſt proper and the principal expreſſions of our gratitude unto God; ſo that in omitting them, we are not onely very unjuſt, but highly ingratefull. Innumerable are the benefits, favours

and mercies, (both common and private,) which God hath beſtowed on us, and doth continually beſtow: he inceſſantly ſhowrs down
Pſal. 68. 19. bleſſings on our heads; he *daily*
Pſalm 103. 4. *loadeth us with his benefits*; he perpetually *crowneth us with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies*: all that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty: our beings and lives, with all the conveniences and comforts of them, we entirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preſerver, our conſtant Benefactor: all the excellent privileges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Chriſtians, we alſo ſtand indebted for purely to his undeſerved mercy and grace.
Pſal. 116. 12. And, *What ſhall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?* Shall we render him nothing? ſhall we refuſe him any thing? ſhall we boggle at making returns ſo inconſiderable, in regard to what

what he hath done for us? What is a little Gold, or Silver, or Braſs perhaps, which our poor Neighbour craveth of us, in compariſon to our life, our health, our reaſon, to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favour of God, to the pardon of our ſins, to the gifts of God's Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God, and heirs of ſalvation; to the being freed from extream miſeries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpreſſible goodneſs, do not all theſe ineſtimable benefits require ſome correſpondent thankfulneſs? Are we not obliged, ſhall we not be willing to exhibit ſome real teſtimony thereof? And what other can we exhibit beſide this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot ſo receive any thing from us; he is not

capable of being himſelf enriched or exalted, of being any-wiſe pleaſured or bettered by us, who is in himſelf infinitely ſufficient, glorious, joyfull and happy: *Our goodneſs extends not to him; A man cannot be profitable to his Maker.* All that we can doe in this kind, is thus indirectly, in the perſons of his poor relations, to gratify him, imparting at his deſire, and for his ſake, ſomewhat of what he hath beſtowed on us, upon them. Such a thankfull return we owe unto God, not onely for what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of thoſe who can afford relief, and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and proſperous ſtate ſhould not ſeem to us ſo contemptible things, that we ſhould be unwilling to render ſomewhat back in gratefull reſentment for them: the very act of giving is it ſelf no mean

Pſalm 16. 2.
Job 22. 2.

Δός τι θεῷ χαριστήριον, ὅτι τῶν εὖ ποιεῖν δυναμένων ἐγένου, ἀλλ' οὐ τῶν εὖ παθεῖν δεομένων. Naz. — τὴν φιλάνθρωπον ὑμνῆσαι δεσπότην, ὅτι τοῖς ἀλλοτρίοις ἡμᾶς σωφρονίζει παθήμασι; καὶ οὐχ ἡμᾶς εἰς ἐτέ-

mean benefit; (having ſo much of honour in it, ſo much of pleaſure going with it, ſo much of reward following it;) we receive far more then we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit that we ſhould return our gratitude, and conſequently that we ſhould perform theſe Duties. For indeed without this practice, no other expreſſion of gratitude can be true in it ſelf, or can be acceptable unto God. We may ſeem abundantly to thank him in words; but a ſparing hand gives the lie to the fulleſt mouth: we may ſpare our breath, if we keep back our ſubſtance: for all our praiſing God for his goodneſs, and bleſſing him with our lips, if we will doe nothing for him, if we will not part with any thing for his ſake, appears meer complement, is in truth plain mockery, and vile hypocriſy.

ϛων παρέπεμψεν οἰκίας, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰς ἡμετέρας ἄλλας ἤγαγε θύρας. Theod. *Ep.* 30.

εἰ δὲ μὴ νομίζεις λαμβάνειν μᾶλλον, ἢ δίδοναι, μὴ παρέχης. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *Orat.* 54.

Nec enim homo Deo præſtat beneficium in his quæ dederit, ſed Deus his homini quæ acceperit. Salvian.

4. Yea, which we may farther

consider, all our devotion severed from a disposition of practising these Duties, is no less such; cannot have any true worth in it, shall not yield any good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, what are they other then demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face presume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requesting a small matter from us? How can we with any reason expect any mercy from him, when we vouchsafe not to shew any mercy for his sake? Can we imagine, that God will harken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his entreaties, and regardless of his desires? No; *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.* 'Tis his declaration to such bold and unreasonable petitioners, *When you spread forth*

Prov. 21. 13.

Isa. 1. 15.

forth your hands, I will not hear you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear. No importunity, no frequency of prayers will move God in ſuch a caſe; the needy man's cries and complaints will drown their noiſe; his ſighs and groans will obſtruct their paſſage, and ſtop the ears of God againſt them. Likewiſe all our ſemblances of repentance, all our corporal abſtinencies and auſterities, if a kind and mercifull diſpoſition are wanting, what are they truly but preſumptuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not groſly collude with ſin, when we reſtrain the ſenſual appetites of the body, but foment the ſoul's more unreaſonable deſires? when we curb our wanton fleſh, and give licence to a baſe ſpirit? Do we not palpably baffle, when in reſpect to God we pretend to deny our ſelves, yet upon urgent occaſion allow him no-

Jam. 5. 4.

Ecclus. 4. 4, 5, 6.

τί δὲ κέρδος, σωφροσύνη μετὰ πανθρωπίας; &c. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *Ora.* 55.

thing? Do we not ſtrangely prevaricate, when we would ſeem to appeaſe God's anger, and purchaſe his favour by our ſubmiſſions, yet refuſe to doe that which he declares moſt pleaſing to him, and moſt neceſſary to thoſe purpoſes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to ſerve God, and thus to delude themſelves: *I have known many* (ſaith S. *Baſil*) *who have faſted, and prayed, and groaned, and expreſſed all kind of coſtleſs piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted.* Such a cheap and eaſie piety, which * coſts us little or nothing, can ſurely not be worth much; and we muſt not conceit that the All-wiſe God (*the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed*, as *Anna* ſang, and, who *weighed the ſpirits* alſo, as the Wiſe-man ſaith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more then its juſt value. No, he hath expreſly ſignified, that he hath *not choſen*

Οἵδα πολλοὺς νηστεύοντας, περσάχεμψύχους, στενάζοντας, πᾶσαν τὴν ἀδάπανον εὐλάβειαν ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὀβολὸν ὃ ἕνα μὴ περιεμένοντας τοῖς θλιβομένοις.
Baſ. M. *in Luc.* 12. 8.

* 2 Sam. 24. 24.
1 Sam. 2. 3.
Prov. 16. 2.

choſen ſuch ſervices, nor doth take any pleaſure in them: he hath called them *vain and impertinent oblations*.; not *ſweet* or *acceptable*, but *abominable* and *troubleſome* to him, ſuch as he *cannot away with*, and *is weary to bear*. 'Tis *religious liberality* that doth prove us to be ſerious and earneſt in other *religious performances*; which aſſures that we value matters of Piety at a conſiderable rate; which gives a ſubſtance and ſolidity to our Devotions; which ſanctifies our Faſts, and verifies our Penances; which renders our praiſes real, and our prayers effectual: ſo that theſe being combined, we may reaſonably expect acceptance and recompence; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good *Cornelius*, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*

Iſa. 58. 5. & 1. 13, 14. Mic. 6. 6, 7. Jer. 6. 20. Acts 10. 4.

5. The conſcionable practice of theſe

theſe Duties doth plainly ſpring from thoſe good diſpoſitions of mind regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true Piety; and the neglect of them iſſueth from thoſe vicious diſpoſitions which have a peculiar inconſiſtency with Piety, being deſtructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the fundamental Grace upon which Piety is grounded; Love and Fear of God are the radical Principles from which it grows: all which as the charitable man, diſcovers in his practice, ſo they are apparently baniſhed from the heart of the illiberal and unmercifull perſon.

As for Faith, the good man, in ſhewing Bounty, exerciſeth the chief act thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, becauſe he truſteth on God's Providence more then them; and believeth God more ready to help him, then any Crea-

ture

ture can do, in his need: becauſe he is perſwaded that God is moſt good and benign, ſo as never to ſuffer him to be oppreſſed with want; becauſe he taketh God to be juſt and faithfull, who having charged him *to care for nothing*, but *to caſt his care and burthen upon the Lord*, having promiſed to *care for him*, to *ſuſtain him*, *never* to *leave or forſake him*, having alſo engaged himſelf to repay and recompenſe him for what he giveth to his poor Neighbour, will not fail to make good his word; becauſe he thinks God abundantly ſolvent, and himſelf never the poorer for laying out in his behalf; becauſe, in ſhort, he is content to live in a dependance upon God, and at his diſpoſal. It is mentioned by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, as a ſpecial inſtance of a reſolute and conſtant faith in the firſt Chriſtians, that *they took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods*, *know-*

Matt. 6. 25. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

Pſal. 55. 22. Heb. 13. 5.

Heb. 10. 34.

knowing in themſelves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance. He that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free reſignation for the ſervice of God, delivereth them up with the ſame alacrity, opinion and hope, thereby demonſtrates the ſame faith. But the *gripple Wretch*, who will beſtow nothing on his poor Brother for God's ſake, is evidently an Infidel, having none at all, or very heatheniſh conceits of God. He muſt be either a meer Atheiſt, disbelieving the exiſtence of God; or an Epicurean, in his heart denying God's Providence over humane affairs; (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what paſſes here, how could he be afraid of wanting upon this ſcore? how could he repoſe any confidence in theſe poſſeſſions? how could he think himſelf ſecure in ſuch a neglect

Ὁ δὲ πιῶπος οὐ πρὸ θεῷ πεπίστευκεν, ἀλλὰ πρὸ ἑαυτῷ χρυσίῳ, θεὸν τοῦτο ἡγούμενος, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πεποιθώς. Conſt. Apoſt. 4. 4.

glect or defiance of God?) or he must be exceedingly prophane, entertaining most dishonourable and injurious apprehensions of God. He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not onely in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to suffer for spending upon his accompt; very unjust, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithfull, in breaking his word; very deceitfull, in gulling us of our things by fair promises of restitution and requital: Or he must apprehend God forgetfull of what we doe, and himself says; or that he is needy and impotent, not having wherewith to make satisfaction, not being able to make good what he pretends. He must in his conceit debase God even beneath the vilest Creatures, thinking a senseless lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, then God can be with all his power and care; supposing

poſing his mony ſafer in his own Coffers then in God's hands, and that Iron Bars will guard it more ſurely then Divine protection; eſteeming his Neighbour's Bond for much better ſecurity then God's Word, and that a mortal Man is far more able or more true then the Eternal God. He certainly cannot think one word true that God ſays, being loth to truſt him for a penny, for a piece of bread, or for an old garment. All God's promiſes of recompence, and threatnings of puniſhment, he takes for idle fictions: Heaven and Hell are but *Utopia's* in his conceit; the joys of one, offered to the charitable perſon, are but pleaſant fancies; the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearfull dreams. All other things are but names; Money and Lands are the onely real things unto him: all the happineſs he can conceive or with

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is contained in Bags and Barns; Habac. 2. 9.
theſe are the ſole points of his Faith, and objects of his confidence. *He makes gold his hope*, Job 31. 24, *and ſaith to the fine gold, Thou art* 45. *my confidence. He rejoyces becauſe his wealth is great, and becauſe his hand hath gotten much*, (as *Job* ſpeaketh, diſclaiming that practice in himſelf, and tacitly charging it on the perſons we ſpeak of.) He doth in fine affect a total independency upon God, and cares to have no dealing with him; he would truſt to himſelf, and live on his own eſtate: ſo groſs infidelity, and horrible prophaneneſs of mind, lie couched under this ſort of vices.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for God's ſake he is willing to part with any thing, that he values God's love and favour above all other goods; that he deems himſelf rich and happy enough in the enjoy-

1 John 3. 17. enjoyment of God. But, *Who hath this world's goods, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* ſaith S. *John*: that is, it is impoſſible he ſhould love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous thing for him to pretend it. For how poſſibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his ſake, and at his inſtance, part with a little worthleſs traſh, and dirty pelf? who prizes ſo inconſiderable matters beyond God's favour and friendſhip? who prefers the keeping of his wealth, before the enjoyment of God; and chuſes rather certainly to quit his whole intereſt in God, then to adventure a ſmall parcell of his eſtate with God? His practice indeed ſufficiently diſcovers, that his hard and ſtupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate

nate and fond love, or dotage toward himſelf, ſince ſo preſent and ſenſible objects cannot affect him. *He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God, whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 Joh. 4. 20.

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man expreſſes it in ſubmiſſion to God's commands, although with his own preſent ſeeming diminution and loſs; in preferring the diſcharging of his Conſcience before the retaining his Money; in caſting over-board his temporal goods, that he may ſecure his ſpiritual and eternal concernments. He can ſay (his practice atteſting to his profeſſion) with *David, I love thy commandments above gold*; and, *The Law of thy mouth is dearer to me then thouſands of gold and ſilver*: he ſhews that he is *a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetouſneſs*; which diſpoſitions, as having much affinity and con- Pſalm 119. 127. Exod. 18. 21.

F nexion,

nexion, are well joyned together by *Jethro.* But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes; since the commands of God have no efficacy on his Conscience; since he dreads not the effects of Divine power and justice, provoked by his disobedience; since he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worse then a certain commission of sin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, then of damnation hereafter.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, because his heart is possessed with vain devotion toward somewhat beside God, which in effect is his sole Divinity: he is justly stiled an Idolater, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind upon an Idol of Clay, which he loves with all his heart and all his soul, which he entirely confides in, which

Colos. 3. 5.
Ephes. 5. 5.

which he eſteems and worſhips above all things. It is Mammon, which of all the Competitors and Antagoniſts of God, invading God's right, and uſurping his place, is (as our Lord intimates) the moſt dangerous, and deſperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true Religion is quite excluded; *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Other vitious inclinations combat Reaſon, and often baffle it, but ſeldom ſo vanquiſh it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himſelf in his miſcarriages: but the covetous humour ſeizeth on our Reaſon it ſelf, and ſeateth it ſelf therein; inducing it to favour and countenance what is done amiſs. The Voluptuous man is ſwayed by the violence of his appetite; but the Covetous is ſeduced by the dictate of his judgment: he therefore ſcrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, becauſe he eſteems wealth the beſt Matt. 6. 24.

thing in the world, and then judges himſelf moſt wiſe, when he
Prov. 23. 4. is moſt baſe. *Labour not to be rich, ceaſe from thine own wiſedom,* ſaith *Solomon*; intimating the judgment ſuch perſons are wont to make of their riches: whence of all diſpoſitions oppoſite to Piety, this is the moſt pernicious. But farther,

6. Let us conſider, that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like to him, then Beneficence and Mercy; and that conſequently nothing can be more gratefull to him: that nothing is more diſagreeable and contrary to the eſſential diſpoſition of God, then Illiberality and Unmercifulneſs; and therefore that nothing can be more diſtaſtfull to him. What is any Being in the world, but an efflux of his Bounty, and an argument of his Liberality? Look every where about Nature, conſider the whole tenour of

of Providence, ſurvey all the works and ſcan all the actions of God, you will find them all conſpiring in atteſtation to thoſe ſweet Characters and Elogies which the holy Scripture aſcribeth to God, repreſenting him to be *Mercifull and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs*; to be *ſorry for evil*, (incident to or inflicted upon any Creature,) to *delight in mercy*, to *wait that he may be gracious*; ſtyling him the *God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all conſolation, the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels*; affirming of him, and by manifold evidences demonſtrating, that he is *benign even unto the ingratefull and evil*; that *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* Nature, (I ſay) Providence and Revelation, do all concur in teſtifying this, that there is nothing in God ſo peculiarly admirable, nothing (as it were)

Exod. 34. 6. Joel 2. 13.
Mic. 7. 18. Iſai. 30. 18.
Rom. 15. 33, 15, 5. Epheſ. 2. 4. 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1. 3. Jam. 5. 11. 1 Pet. 5. 10.
Luke 6. 35. Pſal. 145. 9.
Θεῦ πολλῶν ὄντων ἐρ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν ὕπως ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργέλειν ἠθέλησεν. Naz. *Orat.* 26.

were) ſo God-like, that is, ſo highly venerable and amiable, as to doe good and ſhew mercy. We therefore by liberal communication to the needy do moſt approach to the nature of God, and moſt exactly imitate his practice; acquiring to our ſelves thereby ſomewhat of Divinity, and becoming little Gods to our Neighbour. *Nothing* (ſaith S. *Chryſoſtome*) *maketh us ſo near equal to God, as beneficence:* and, *Be* (ſaith S. *Gregory Nazianzen*) *a God to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God ſo much as to doe good.* That ſuch hath always been the common apprehenſion of men, the practice of all times ſheweth, in that men have been ever apt to place their Benefactours among their Gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degree, which in perfection do appertain to the ſupreme Benefactour. *Be merciful,*

Deus eſt mortali, juvare mortalem. Plin. *Nat. H. lib.* 2.

Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἴσους θεῷ ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. Chryſ. *in Mat. Ora.* 35. Γένου τῷ ἀτυχοῦντι θεὸς, τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ θεοῦ μιμησάμενος· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὡς τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἄνθρωπος ἔχει θεοῦ. Naz. *Orat.* 16.

Hic eſt vetuſtiſſimus referendi bene merentibus gratiam mos, ut tales numinibus adſcribantur. Plin. 2. 7.

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as your heavenly Father is merciſull *; ſo our Saviour propoſeth God's mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulneſs: implying it alſo to be a good ſign declaring us the children of God, the genuine off-ſpring of the all-good and all-mercifull Father; yea, that it even renders and conſtitutes us ſuch, (we thereby coming moſt truly to repreſent, and moſt nearly to reſemble him.) Our Lord farther teaches us, ſaying, *Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, doe good to thoſe that hate you—that you may be the ſons of your Father which is in heaven.* And they who thus are God's children muſt conſequently be very dear to him, and moſt gracious in his ſight; he cannot but greatly like and love himſelf (the beſt of himſelf) in them; he cannot but cheriſh and treat them well, who are the faireſt and trueſt images of himſelf;

Suſcepit vita hominum, conſuetudoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cœlum famâ ac voluntate tollerent. Cic. *de N. D.* 2.

* Luk. 6. 35, 36.

Matt. 5. 44, 45.

himſelf: no ſpectacle can be ſo pleaſant to him, as to ſee us in our practice to act himſelf, doing
Coloſ. 3. 12, 13. good to one another; *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as*
Eph. 5. 1, 2. *Chriſt forgave us*; being *followers of God as dear Children, and walking in love, even as Chriſt alſo loved us.* But on the other ſide, there is not in Nature any thing ſo remotely diſtant from God, or ſo extreamly oppoſite to him, as a greedy and griping Niggard; Hell is ſcarce ſo contrary to Heaven, as ſuch a man's diſpoſition to the nature of God: for 'tis *Goodneſs* which ſits glorioufly triumphant at the top of Heaven; and *Uncharitableneſs* lieth miſerably groveling under the bottom of Hell: Heaven deſcends from the one, as its principal cauſe; Hell is built on the other,

other, as its main foundation: as the one approximates the bleſſed Angels to God, and beatifies them; ſo the other removeth the curſed Fiends to ſuch a diſtance from God and happineſs: not to wiſh, not to doe any good, is that which renders them both ſo bad, and ſo wretched; and whoever in his conditions is ſo like to them, and in his practice ſo agrees with them, cannot but alſo be very odious to God, and extreamly unhappy. God cannot but abhor ſo baſe a degeneration from his likeneſs in thoſe who by nature are his children, and ſhould be farther ſuch according to his gracious deſign; neither can any thing more offend his eyes, then ſeeing them to uſe one another unkindly. So that if obtaining the certain favour of the great God, with all the benefits attending it, ſeem conſiderable to us; or if we think it adviſable to ſhun his diſpleaſure, with its ſad effects;

effects; it concerns us to practiſe theſe Duties. So I conclude that ſort of Conſiderations, enforcing theſe Duties, which more immediately regard God.

III. Head of Diſcourſe. Farther, before we deny our relief to our poor Neighbour, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and attentively conſider who he is, what he is in himſelf, and what he is in relation unto us. [*The righteous conſidereth the cauſe of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it*, Prov. 29. 7. *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the poor*, Pſal. 41. 1.]

1. He whoſe need craves our Bounty, whoſe miſery demands our Mercy, what is he? He is not truly ſo mean and ſorry a thing, as the diſguiſe of misfortune, under which he appears, doth repreſent him. He who looks ſo deformedly and diſmally, who to outward ſight is ſo ill beſtead, and ſo pitifully

pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory. He within himſelf containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal Soul, and an intelligent Mind, by which he nearly reſembleth God himſelf, and is comparable to Angels: he inviſibly is owner of endowments rendring him capable of the greateſt and beſt things. What are Money and Lands? what are Silk and fine Linen? what are Horſes and Hounds in compariſon to Reaſon, to Wiſedom, to Vertue, to Religion, which he hath, or (in deſpight of all miſfortune) he may have if he pleaſe? He whom you behold ſo dejectedly ſneaking, in ſo deſpicable a garb, ſo deſtitute of all convenience and comfort, (lying in the duſt, naked or clad with rags, meager with hunger or pain,) he comes of a moſt high and heavenly extraction: he was born a Prince; the Son of the greateſt King Eternal; he

he can truly call the Sovereign Lord of all the World his Father, having derived his Soul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himſelf.

Prov. 22. 2. (In this, *The rich and poor*, as the Wiſe man ſaith, *do meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.*) That ſame forlorn Wretch, whom we are ſo apt to deſpiſe and trample upon, was framed and conſtituted

Gen. 1. 28. Lord of the viſible World; had all the goodly brightneſſes of Heaven, and all the coſtly furnitures of Earth created to ſerve him.

Pſal. 8. 6. (*Thou madeſt him* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt* of Man) *to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou haſt put all things under his feet.*) Yea, he was made an inhabitant of Paradiſe, and poſſeſſour of felicities ſuperlative; had immortal life and endleſs joy in his hand, did enjoy the entire favour and friendſhip of the moſt High. Such in worth of Nature and nobleneſs of

of Birth he is, as a Man: and highly more conſiderable he is, as a Chriſtian. For, as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath ſo regarded and prized him, as for his ſake to deſcend from Heaven, to cloath himſelf with fleſh, to aſſume the form of a ſervant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greateſt inconveniences, infirmities, wants and diſgraces, the moſt grievous troubles and moſt ſharp pains incident to mortal nature. God hath adopted him to be his Child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him Brother: he is a Member of *Chriſt*, a Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, a free Denizon of the heavenly City, an Heir of Salvation, and Candidate of eternal Glory. The greateſt and richeſt Perſonage is not capable of better Privileges then God hath granted him, or of higher preferments then God hath deſigned him to. He equally with the

the mightieſt Prince is the object of God's eſpecial Providence and Grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good *Elihu* ſaith, *accepteth not the perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more then the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.* In fine, this poor Creature whom thou ſeeſt is a Man, and a Chriſtian, thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition: I ſay not, in the uncertain and unſtable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly ſtate, which is very inconſiderable; but in gifts vaſtly more precious, in title to an eſtate infinitely more rich and excellent. Yea, if thou art vain and proud, be ſober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth ſurpaſſing thee: for, *Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightneſs, then he that is perverſe*

Job 34. 19. — ἐννόησον, ὅτι ὁμοίως σοι ἐλεύθερός ἐστι, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς σοι κοινωνεῖ εὐγενείας, καὶ πάντα σοι κοινὰ κέκτηται. Chryſ. *in Heb. Orat.* 2. Οἱ τοίνυν ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς τοσαύτην ἔχοντες ἰσοτιμίαν, πόθεν μέγα φρονεῖτε; ὅτι ὁ δεῖνα πλούσιος, καὶ ὁ δεῖνα ἰσχυρός; Chryſ. *in Eph.* 4. 4. *in Joh. Orat.* 15. Ἡ τοῦ πνεύματος χάρις ὁμοτίμους ποιεῖ τοὺς ὁμόφρονας. Naz. *Orat.* 23. Ecclus. 10. 24. Prov. 28. 6.

verſe in his ways, though he be rich.

2. That diſtinction which thou ſtandeſt upon, and which ſeemeth ſo vaſt between thy poor Neighbour and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not any-wiſe natural, or according to primitive deſign: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, ſo were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all conſtituted in a moſt proſperous and plentifull eſtate; all things at firſt were promiſcuouſly expoſed to the uſe and enjoyment of all, every one from the common ſtock aſſuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private intereſt in things (together with ſickneſſes and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniences) were the by-blows of our Fall: Sin introduced theſe degrees and diſtances; it

Πενία καὶ πλοῦτος, ἀλλοτριότης τις, ἢν φαμὲν, καὶ δουλεία, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἦν ὀνόματα, ὕστερον ἐπεισελθόντα τῷ βίῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ ἀρρωστήματα τῇ κακίᾳ συνεισπεσόντα, καὶ κείνης ὄντα ὀπηδήματα. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 6.

it deviſed the names of rich and poor; it begot theſe ingroſſings and incloſures of things; it forged thoſe two ſmall peſtilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendred ſo much ſtrife among men, and created ſo much miſchief in the world: theſe preternatural diſtinctions were (I ſay) brooded by our fault, and are in great part foſtered and maintained thereby; for were we generally ſo good, ſo juſt, ſo charitable as we ſhould be, they could hardly ſubſiſt, eſpecially in that meaſure they do. God indeed (for promoting ſome good ends, and for prevention of ſome miſchiefs, apt to ſpring from our ill nature in this our lapſed ſtate; particularly to prevent the ſtrife and diſorder which ſcrambling would cauſe among men, preſu-

τὸ γὰρ ἐμὸν, καὶ τὸ σὸν, τοῦτο τὸ ψυχρὸν ῥῆμα, καὶ μυρίους πολέμους εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην εἰσαγαγὸν, &c. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. λογ. νδ'. *&c in Act.* 2. 47. *Natura omnia omnibus in commune profudit; ſic enim Deus generari juſſit omnia, ut paſtus omnibus communis eſſet, & terra foret omnium quædam communis poſſeſſio. Natura igitur jus commune generavit, uſurpatio jus fecit privatum.* Amb. *Offic.* 1. 28. καὶ γὰρ εἰ μετὰ ἀκριβείας τοῦτο ἐτυλάττετο, οὐ δοῦλος, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος ἦν, οὐκ ἄρχων, οὐκ ἀρχόμενος, οὐ πλούσιος, οὐ πένης, οὐ μικρὸς, οὐ μέγας, οὐ διάβολος ἂν ἐγνώσθη ποτέ. Chryſ. *in* 1 *Cor. Orat.* 32.

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ming on equal right, and parity of force) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoyns us a contented submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein. No, every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence. God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extream want; but hath assigned to every one a Child's portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect. No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to destroy superfluously what another man apparently wants, but is obliged to impart

Ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐν θεάτρῳ θεὰν καταλαβὼν εἶτα εἰσείργοι τοὺς ἐπεισιόντας ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ κρίνων τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσι κατὰ τὴν χρῆσιν προκείμενον· τοιοῦτοί εἰσι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι· τὰ καὶ κοινὰ προκατάσχοντες ἰδιοποιοῦνται διὰ τὴν πρόληψιν. Basil. *M.*

Incassùm se innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus sibi privatum vindicant. Greg. *M.*

it to him: ſo that rich men are indeed but the Treaſurers, the Stew-
Matt. 24. 45. ards, the Caterers of God for the reſt of men, having a ſtrict charge
Luke 12. 42. to *diſpenſe unto every one his meat in due ſeaſon*, and no juſt privilege to withhold it from any: the honour of diſtribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reſerved to the poor, as a proviſion for their neceſſity. Thus hath God wiſely projected, that all his Children ſhould both effectually and quietly be provided for; and that none of them ſhould be oppreſſed with penury;
2 Cor. 8. 14. ſo that (as S. *Paul* hath it) *One man's abundance ſhould ſupply another man's want, that there may be an equality*: for ſince no man can enjoy more then he needs, and every man ſhould have ſo much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the diſtinction will ſcarce remain other-

other-where then in fancy. What the Philoſopher ſaid of himſelf, *What I have is ſo mine, that it is every mans*, is according to the practice of each man, who is truly and in due meaſure charitable; whereby that ſeemingly enormous diſcrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of Divine Providence is vindicated. But he that ravenouſly graſps for more then he can well uſe, and gripes it faſt into his clutches, ſo that the needy in their diſtreſs cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity which God hath eſtabliſhed in things, defeats his good intention, (ſo far as he can) and brings a ſcandal on his Providence; and ſo doing is highly both injurious and impious.

Ego mea ſic habeo, ut omnium ſint. Demetrius apud Sen. de *Benef.* VII. 10.

Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸ πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, οὐδὲν πλεονεκτεῖ τῶν πλησίον. Baſil. *M.*

3. It was alſo (which we ſhould conſider) even one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's Providence, that as ſome mens induſtry

and patience might be exercised by their poverty, so other men by their wealth should have ability of practising justice and charity; that so both rich and poor might thence become capable of recompences, suitable to the worth of such vertuous performances. *Why art thou rich* (saith S. *Basil*) *and he poor? Surely for this; That thou mayest attain the reward of benignity, and faithfull dispensation; and that he may be honoured with the great prize of patience.* God in making thee rich, would have thee to be a double Benefactour, not onely to thy poor Neighbour, but also to thy self, whilst thou bestowest relief on him, purchasing a reward to thy self. God also by this order of things designs, that a charitable entercourse should be maintained among men, mutually pleasant and beneficial; the rich kindly obliging the poor, and the poor gratefully serving the

Διά τι σὺ μὲν πλουτεῖς, ἐκεῖνος δὲ πένεται; ἢ πάντως ἵνα σὺ χρηστότητος καὶ πιστῆς οἰκονομίας μισθὸν ὑποδέξῃ, κἀκεῖνος τοῖς μεγάλοις ἄθλοις τῆς ὑπομονῆς τιμηθῇ. Bas. *M.* Πλοῦτον καὶ πενίαν, τοῖς ἀνθρώποις διένειμεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων δημιουργός τε καὶ πρύτανις οὐκ ἀδίκῳ ψήφῳ χρησάμενος, ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν ὠφελείας τοῖς πλουσίοις παρέχων τῶν πενήτων τὴν ἔνδειαν. Theod. *Ep.* 23.

the rich. Wherefore by neglecting theſe duties, we unadviſedly croſs the good purpoſe of God toward us, depriving our ſelves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We ſhould alſo do well to conſider, that a poor man, even as ſuch, is not to be diſregarded, and that poverty it ſelf is no ſuch contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine: there are Conſiderations, which may qualify Poverty even to diſpute the place with Wealth, and to claim precedence to it: If the world vulgarly doth account, and call the rich man happy, a better Authour hath pronounced the poor man ſuch: *Bleſſed are the poor*, doth march Luke 6. 20. in the van of the Beatitudes, and a reaſon goeth along therewith, which aſſerteth its right to the place, *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; for that they are not onely in an equal capacity as men,

but in a nearer disposition as poor, to the acquisition of that blissfull state; for that poverty (the Mistress of Sobriety and honest Industry, the Mother of Humility and Patience, the Nurse of all Vertue) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward Heaven; by it also we conform unto the Son of God himself, the Heir of Eternal Majesty, the Saviour of the World, *who for our sake became poor*, (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, for our sake became a beggar) *that we through his poverty* (or beggary) *might become rich*: he willingly chose, he especially dignified and sanctified that depth of poverty, which we so proudly slight and loath. The greatest Princes and Potentates in the World, the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor Beggar had been irrecoverably miserable: to Poverty it is, that every one of us doth owe

2 Cor. 8. 9.

owe all the possibility there is, all the hopes we can have of our Salvation; and shall we then ingratefully requite it with scorn, or with pitiless neglect? shall we presume in the person of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but most holy and most happy JESUS, our Lord and Redeemer? No; if we will doe Poverty right, we must rather for his dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

Dedignatur aliquis pauperatem, cujus tam claræ imagines sunt? Sen. *Consol. ad Helv.* 12.

5. Thus a due reflection on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succour; but let us also consider him as related unto our selves: Every such person is our near Kinsman, is our Brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in bloud, and agreement in Nature knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one source, several twigs sprouting

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debetur. Aug. *Epist.* 121.

from one ſtock; *One bloud*, derived through ſeveral channels; one ſubſtance, by miraculous efficacy of the Divine Benediction, multiplyed or dilated unto ſeveral times and places. We are all faſhioned according to the ſame original Idea, reſembling God our common Father; we are all endowed with the ſame faculties, inclinations and affections; we all conſpire in the ſame eſſential ingredients of our conſtitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof; it is onely ſome inconſiderable accidents, (ſuch as age, place, figure, ſtature, colour, garb) which diverſify and diſtinguiſh us; in which, according to ſucceſſions of time and chance, we commonly no leſs differ from our ſelves, then we do at preſent from them: ſo that in effect and reaſonable eſteem, every man is not onely our Brother, but (as *Ariſtotle* ſaith of a friend)

Act. 17. 26. Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον. Ariſt.

Ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις πάθεσι θεραπευτέον τὸ συγγενὲς, καὶ ὁμόδουλον. Greg. Naz.

ἄλλος

ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another ones ſelf*; is not onely our moſt lively image, but in a manner our very ſubſtance; another our ſelf under a ſmall variation of preſent circumſtances: the moſt of diſtinction between us and our poor Neighbour, conſiſts in exteriour ſhew, in moveable attire, in caſual appendages to the nature of man; ſo that really when we uſe him well, we are kind to our ſelves, when we yield him courteous regard, we bear reſpect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do ſuſtain and cheriſh a member of our own body: but when we are cruel or harſh to him, we abuſe our ſelves; when we ſcorn him, we lay diſparagement and diſgrace on mankind it ſelf; when we withhold ſuccour or ſuſtenance from him, we do (as the Prophet ſpeaketh) *hide our ſelves from our own fleſh*; we ſtarve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of

Nihil eſt unum uni tam ſimile, tam par, quàm omnes inter noſmetipſos ſumus. Cic. *de Leg.* 1.

Iſai. 58. 7.

of our ſtock: immoderate ſelfiſhneſs ſo blindeth us, that we overſee and forget our ſelves: it is in this, as it is in other good ſenſes, true what the Wiſe man ſaith, *The mercifull man doeth good to his own ſoul; but he that is cruel, troubleth his own fleſh.*

Prov. 11. 17.

6. Farther, as the poor man is ſo nearly allied to us by ſociety of common nature, ſo is he more ſtrictly joyned to us by the bands of ſpiritual Conſanguinity. All Chriſtians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the ſame heavenly Father, ſpring from the ſame incorruptible ſeed, are regenerated to the ſame lively hope, are Co-heirs of the ſame heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body, (*members*, ſaith S. *Paul*, *one of another*) and animated by one holy ſpirit: which relation, as it is the moſt noble, and the moſt cloſe that can be, ſo it ſhould breed the greateſt endearments, and

Rom. 12. 5. *Are all one*; Gal. 3. 28. πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Chryſ. *in Joh. Or.* 15.

and ſhould expreſs it ſelf in correſpondent effects; it ſhould render us full of affection and ſympathy one toward another; it ſhould make us to tender the needs, and feel the ſufferings of any Chriſtian as our own; it ſhould diſpoſe us freely to communicate whatever we have, how precious ſoever, to any of our brethren: this holy friendſhip ſhould eſtabliſh a charitable equality and community among us, both in point of honour and of eſtate: for ſince all things conſiderable are common unto us, ſince we are all purchaſed and purified by the ſame precious bloud, ſince we all partake of the ſame precious faith, of the ſame high calling, of the ſame honourable privileges, of the ſame glorious promiſes and hopes; ſince we all have the ſame Lord and Saviour; why ſhould theſe ſecular trifles be ſo private and particular among us? Why

Φίλων γὰρ ἁπάντων ἴσον, οἵπερ φίλοι ὀρθῶς πέφυκασ', ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα. Eurip. Androm.

Why ſhould not ſo huge a parity in thoſe onely valuable things not wholly (I ſay not in worldly ſtate, or outward appearance, ſuch as the preſervation of order in ſecu-
Coloſ. 3. 11. lar affairs requireth, but) in our opinion and affection extinguiſh that ſlight diſtinction of *rich* and *poor*, in concernments temporal? How can we ſlight ſo noble, ſo great a Perſonage as a Chriſtian, for wanting a little droſs? How
Heb. 2. 11. can we deem our ſelves much his
Matt. 25. 40. ſuperiour, upon ſo petty an ad-
Joh. 15. 14. vantage, for having that, which is not worth ſpeaking or thinking of, in compariſon to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himſelf is not aſhamed to call the leaſt among us his Brother, and his Friend; and ſhall we then diſdain to yield to ſuch an one the regard, and treatment ſuitable to ſuch a Quality? Shall we not honour any Brother of our Lord? ſhall we not be civil and kind to any Friend

Friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true reſpect or affection unto himſelf? It is his expreſs precept, that the greateſt among us ſhould, in imitation of his moſt humble and charitable Self, be ready to ſerve the meaneſt; and, that we ſhould *in honour prefer one another*, and *in lowlineſs of mind eſteem others better then our ſelves*, are Apoſtolical Rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by diſregarding the poor. Yea, this relation ſhould, according to S. *John*'s Doctrine, diſpoſe us not onely freely to impart theſe temporal goods, but even, if occaſion be, willingly to expoſe our very lives for our brethren: *Hereby*, ſaith he, *we perceive the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.* How greatly then are they deficient from their duty, how

Matt. 20. 26.

Rom. 12. 10. Phil. 2. 3.

1 Joh. 3. 16.

how little in truth are they Christians, who are unwilling to part with the very superfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Christian? Thus considering our Brother, may breed in us charitable dispositions toward him, and induce us to the practice of these duties.

IV. Head of Discourse.

Moreover, if we reflect upon our selves, and consider either our nature, or our state here, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

1. The very constitution, frame and temper of our nature, directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence by observing those duties, we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the best perfection it is capable of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debase the same—

Juven. *Sat.* 15. *---hæc nostri pars optima sensus*; The best of our natural inclinations (those

(thoſe ſacred reliques of God's Image originally ſtamped on our minds) do ſenſibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very ſame bowels, which in our own want do by a lively ſenſe of pain inform us thereof, and inſtigate us to provide for its relief, do alſo grievouſly reſent the diſtreſſes of another, admoniſhing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him ſuccour. Such is the natural ſympathy between men, (diſcernable in all, but appearing moſt vigorous in the beſt natures) that we cannot ſee, cannot hear of, yea can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being ſomewhat diſturbed, and afflicted our ſelves. As alſo Nature, to the acts requiſite toward preſervation of our life, hath annexed a ſenſible pleaſure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: ſo hath ſhe made the communication of benefits to others, to

—*Mutuus ut nos Affectus petere auxilium & præſtare juberet.* Juven. 16.

Φιλόπτωχον καὶ συμπαθὲς τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος. Arch. *ad Mon.* 852.

to be accompanied with a very delicious reliſh upon the mind of him that practiſes it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and ſavory delight then Beneficence. A man may be vertuouſly voluptuous, and a laudable Epicure by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of *Epicurus* himſelf, (the great Patron of Pleaſure) is nowiſe ſo pleaſant as to doe it: God and Nature therefore within us do ſollicite the poor man's caſe; even our own eaſe and ſatisfaction demand from us compaſſion and kindneſs towards him; by exerciſing them, we hearken to Natures wiſe Diſciplines, and comply with her kindly Inſtincts; we cheriſh good humour, and ſweeten our complexion; ſo ennobling our minds, we become not onely more like to God, but more perfectly men; by the contrary practice we rebel againſt the Laws, and pervert the

Ἐπίκυρος τὸ εὖ πάσχειν τοῦ εὖ ποιεῖν φησὶ μεῖζον χάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι. Plut. *de Philoſ. conv. cum Princ.*

the due courſe of our Nature; we do weaken, corrupt and ſtifle that which is beſt in us; we harden and ſtupify our ſouls; ſo monſtrouſly degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and becoming rather like ſavage beaſts, then ſociable men; yea, ſomewhat worſe perhaps then many beaſts; for commonly Brutes will combine to the ſuccour of one another; they will defend and help thoſe of the ſame kind.

2. And if the ſenſitive part within us doth ſuggeſt ſo much, the rational dictates more unto us; that heavenly faculty, having capacities ſo wide, and ſo mighty energies, was ſurely not created to ſerve mean or narrow deſigns; it was not given us to ſcrape eternally in earth, or to amaſs heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the ſervice of one puny creature, for the ſuſtenance or ſatis-

faction of a ſingle carcaſe: 'tis much below an intelligent perſon to weary himſelf with ſervile toils, and diſtract his mind with ignoble cares for concernments ſo low and ſcanty; but to regard and purſue the common good of men; to diſpenſe, adviſe and aid, where need requires, to diffuſe its vertue all about in beneficial effects; theſe are Operations worthy of Reaſon, theſe are employments congruous to the native excellency of that Divine Power implanted in us; ſuch performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he ſprang, and whither he tends.

3. Farther, examining our ſelves, we may alſo obſerve, that we are in reality, what our poor Neighbour appears to be, in many reſpects no leſs indigent and impotent then he: we no leſs, yea far more, for our ſubſiſtence depend upon the arbitrary bounty of another, then he ſeemeth to relie upon

upon ours. We as defectible creatures do continually want support; we as grievous sinners do always need mercy, every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to discharge; debts of gratitude for benefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed; we therefore perpetually stand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the Gates of Heaven. We all, from Prince to Peasant, live meerly upon alms, and are most really in condition Beggers: *to pray always*, is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeness in state should therefore dispose us to succour our fellows, and δανείζειν Θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέῃ χρήζοντας, *to lend mercy to God, who need mercy from him*, as the good Father speaketh. We should (as the Apostle advises and argues) *Remember them that are in bonds*, Greg. Naz. Heb. 13. 3.

as bound with them; and them which ſuffer adverſity, as being our ſelves alſo in the body; as being companions in neceſſity, or ſubject to the like diſtreſs. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet unmindfull of our obligation to God, refuſe them to others, ſhall we not deſerve to hear that dreadfull exprobration, *O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt becauſe thou deſiredſt me; ſhouldeſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?*

Matt. 18. 32, 33.

Ὅμως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπουμένοις ταρβεῖν τὴν εὖ πράσσοντα μὴ σφαλῆ ποτέ. Siphin. Trachi.

4. The great incertainty, and inſtability of our condition, doth alſo require our conſideration. We that now flouriſh in a fair and full eſtate, may ſoon be in the caſe of that poor creature, who now ſues for our relief; we that this day enjoy the wealth of *Job*, may the morrow need his patience; there are *Sabeans*, which may come and drive away our cattel;

tel; there are tempeſts, which may ariſe, and ſmite down our houſes; there is a fire of God, which may fall from Heaven, and conſume our ſubſtance; a meſſenger of all theſe miſchiefs may, for all we know, be preſently at our doors; it happened ſo to a better man then we, as unexpectedly and with as ſmall ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is ſurrounded with dangers, and expoſed to caſualties innumerable; Violence may ſnatch it from us; Treachery may cheat us of it; Miſchance may ſeize thereon, a ſecret Moth may devour it; the wiſedom of Providence for our trial, or its juſtice for our puniſhment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accomptable cauſes were apparent) might eaſily ſerve to waft it from us; for, *Riches* (ſaith the Wiſe-man) *make themſelves wings*, (they it ſeems do Prov. 23. 5.

need no help for that) *and fly away like as an Eagle toward Heaven*; that is, of their own accord they do ſwiftly convey themſelves away, out of our ſight, and beyond our reach: they are but
Eccleſ. 5. 21. wind, *What profit* (ſays the Preacher) *hath he that laboureth for the wind*; for wind, that is, for a thing which can no-wiſe be fixed or ſetled in one corner; which therefore 'tis a vanity to conceive, that we can ſurely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to ſtand firm upon a place ſo ſlippery? How can we build any confidence on a bottom ſo looſe and brittle? How can we ſuffer our minds to be ſwell'd up, like bubbles, with vain conceit, by the breath of ſuch things, more fleeting and vertiginous then any Air? againſt the precepts of the
Pſal. 62. 10. wiſeſt and beſt men: *If riches increaſe*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſet not*
Prov. 23. 5. *your heart* on them: *Wilt thou ſet thine*

thine eyes upon that which is not? ſaith the Wiſe-man: (that is, wilt thou regard that which is ſo tranſitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can ſcarce look on, before it is gone?) and, *Charge them* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches:* (ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, in the obſcurity, or inevidence of riches; things which we can never plainly diſcern how long we ſhall keep them, how much we can enjoy them) what ſhould make us unwilling with certain advantages to our ſelves, freely to let that goe, which preſently without our leave may forſake us? How can we reaſonably judge our caſe much different from that of the pooreſt body, when as in a trice we may perhaps change places and perſons; when the ſcene turning, he may be advanced unto our wealth, we

καὶ γὰρ ἐσχάτης ἀνοίας ἂν εἴη ὧν καὶ ἄκοντες ἐξίστασθαι μέλλομεν ἑτέροις, τούτων μὴ μεταδοῦναι ἑκόντας τοῖς δεομένοις. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *Orat.* 55.

may be depreſſed into his want? ſince every Age yieldeth inſtances of ſome *Crœſus*, ſome *Polycrates*, ſome *Pompey*, ſome *Job*, ſome *Nebuchodonoſor*, who within a ſmall compaſs of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the leſs wiſe the mark both of envy and ſcorn; ſeeing every day preſenteth unexpected viciſſitudes, the Sea of Humane Affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this, now on the other ſhore its reſtleſs waves of profit and credit; ſince eſpecially there is a God, who arbitrarily diſpoſeth things, and with a turn of his hand changeth the ſtate of men; who, as the Scripture ſaith, *Maketh rich and poor, bringeth low and lifteth up; poureth contempt upon Princes; raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghil, to ſet them among Princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:*

Sejanus--*quo die illum Senatus deduxerat, populus in fruſta diviſit.* Sen. *de tranq.* 2.

1 Sam. 2. 7. Job 12. 21. Pſal. 107. 41. 113. 7.

ry: seeing, I say, apparently such is the condition of things here, that we may soon need his pity and help, who now requesteth ours, why should we not be very ready to afford them to him? why should we not gladly embrace our opportunity, and use our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter? *Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days; give a portion to seven, and also unto eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth:* that is, considering the inconstancy and uncertainty of affairs here, and what adversity may befall thee, be liberal upon all occasions, and thou shalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality upon thee: so the Wise-man advises, and so Wisedom certainly dictates that we should doe. Eccles. 11. 1.

5. And

5. And equity doth exact no leſs: for were any of us in the needy man's plight, (as eaſily we may be reduced thereto) we ſhould believe our caſe deſerved commiſeration; we ſhould importunately demand relief; we ſhould be grievouſly diſpleaſed at a repulſe; we ſhould apprehend our ſelves very hardly dealt with, and ſadly we ſhould complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if ſuccour were refuſed to us. In all equity therefore we ſhould be apt to miniſter the ſame to others; for nothing can be more unreaſonable or unjuſt, then to require or expect that from another, which in a like caſe we are unwilling to render unto him; it is a plain deviation from that Fundamental Rule, which is the Baſe of all Juſtice; and virtually the ſum (as our Saviour telleth us) of whatever is preſcribed us: *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould doe*

Beneficium qui dare nescit, injustè petit. Laber. Mim.

Matt. 7. 12.

doe to you, doe ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. I adde, that upon theſe Conſiderations, by unmercifull dealing, we put our ſelves into a very bad and ticklish condition; wholly depending upon the conſtancy of that which is moſt inconſtant; ſo that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reaſonably hope for, nor juſtly pretend to any relief or comfort from others. *He that doeth good turns is mindfull of that which may come hereafter, and when he falleth he ſhall find a ſtay.* Eccleſ. 3. 31.

6. We ſhould alſo remember concerning our ſelves, that we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our Poſſeſſions for ever in our hands; yea, could we foreſee ſome definite ſpace of time, conſiderably long, in which we might aſſuredly enjoy our ſtores, it might ſeem ſomewhat excuſable to ſcrape hard,

hard, and to hold faſt; to doe ſo might look like rational Providence: but ſince *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the Crown endure to all generations*, (as the Wiſe-man ſpeaketh) ſince they muſt infallibly be ſoon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time; 'tis very unaccomptable why we ſhould ſo greedily ſeek them, and hug them ſo fondly. *The rich man*, (ſaith S. *James*) *as the flower of the graſs, ſhall paſs away:* it is his ſpecial doom *to fade away* ſuddenly; it is obvious why in many reſpects he is ſomewhat more then others obnoxious to the fatal ſtroke, and upon ſpecial accompts of juſtice he may be farther more expoſed thereto; conſidering the caſe of the rich fool in the Goſpel, we may eaſily diſcern them; we ſhould reckon, that it may happen to us, as it did there to him; that after we have reared great Barns, and *ſtored up much*

Prov. 27. 24.

Jam. 1. 10, 11.

Luk. 12. 20.

much goods for many years, our *ſoul this very night* may be *required of us*; however, if it be uncertain when, it is moſt certain, that after a very ſhort time our thred will be ſpun out; then ſhall we be rifled, and quite ſtript of all; becoming ſtark naked, as when we came into the world: we ſhall not carry with us one grain of our gliſtering Metals, or one rag of our gaudy Stuff; our ſtately Houſes, our fine Gardens, and our ſpacious Walks, muſt all be exchanged for a cloſe Hole underground; we muſt for ever bid farewell to our Pomps and Magnificences, to our Feaſts and Jollities, to our Sports and Paſtimes; not one of all our numerous and ſplendid retinue; no Companion of our Pleaſure, no Admirer of our Fortune, no Flatterer of our Vices can wait upon us; deſolate and unattended we muſt go down into the Chambers of darkneſs; then

1 Tim. 6. 7. Eccleſ. 5. 15. Job 1. 21.

Iſai. 14. 11.

then ſhall we find, that to die rich (as men are wont improperly to ſpeak) is really to die moſt poor; that to have carefully kept our Money, is to have loſt it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worſe then nothing: To have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmercifull, will be no advantage or ſatisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cauſe of huge damage, and bitter regret unto us. All our Treaſures will not procure us any favour, or purchaſe one Advocate for us in that impartial World; yea, it ſhall be they which will there proſecute us with clamorous accuſations, will bear ſore teſtimony againſt us, (*The ruſt of them*, ſaith S. *James*, *ſhall be a witneſs againſt us*, ſignifying our unjuſt or uncharitable detention of them) will obtain a moſt heavy ſentence upon us; they will render our audit

Jam. 5. 3.
Luke 16. 25.
6. 24.
12. 21.
Matt. 25. 30.
Jam. 5. 5.

dit more difficult, and enflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our ſins with imputations of unfaithfulneſs and ingratitude; ſo with their load they will preſs us deeper into perdition: to omit, that having ſo ill managed them, we ſhall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy upon our memories; for ordinarily of ſuch a rich perſon it is true, that *Job* ſays of him, *Men ſhall clap their hands at him, and ſhall hiſs him out of his place*; like one, who departs from off this ſtage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not therefore infinitely better to prevent this being neceſſarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by ſeaſonably diſpoſing them ſo, as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honour; being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them; modeſt

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Job 27. 19, 23.

τῆ γὰρ ἐσχάτῃ ἀνοίας ὄξιν ἀφεῖναί τι τῆς ἡμετέρων ἀναπομεῖναι ἐνταῦθα, ἡμῶν μικρὸν ὕστερον μελλόντων ἐντεῦθεν ἀποδημεῖν· καὶ γὰρ ὅσῳ ἀπολειφθῇ ζημία γίνεται. πάντα τοίνυν ἐκεῖ προπεμπέσθω, ἔνθα καὶ ἡμεῖς διατρίβειν μέλλομεν λοιπόν. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *Orat.* 54.

modeſt and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and ſober in our enjoyments of them; contented upon any reaſonable occaſion to loſe or leave them; and eſpecially moſt ready to diſpenſe them in that beſt way, which God hath preſcribed, according to the exigencies of Humanity and Charity? By thus
Luke 16. 9. ordering our Riches, we ſhall render them benefits and bleſſings to us; we ſhall by them procure ſure friendſhip and favour, great worſhip and reſpect in the other World; having ſo lived (in the exerciſe of bounty and mercy) we ſhall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby ſent them before us; having, like wiſe Merchants, tranſmitted and drawn them by a moſt ſafe conveyance into our Country and Home; where infallibly we ſhall find them, and with everlaſting

laſting content enjoy them. So conſidering our ſelves, and our ſtate, will diſpoſe us to the practice of theſe Duties.

Furthermore, if we contemplate our Wealth it ſelf, we may therein deſcry great motives to Bounty. V. Head of Diſcourſe.

1. Thus to employ our Riches, is really the beſt uſe they are capable of; not onely the moſt innocent, moſt worthy, moſt plauſible; but the moſt ſafe, moſt pleaſant, moſt advantagious, and conſequently in all reſpects moſt prudent way of diſpoſing them. To keep them cloſe without uſing or enjoying them at all, is a moſt ſottiſh extravagance, or a ſtrange kind of madneſs; a man thence affecting to be rich, quite impoveriſheth himſelf, diſpoſſeſſeth himſelf of all, and alienateth from himſelf his Eſtate: his Gold is no more his, then when it was in the *Indies*, or lay hid in the Mines; his Corn is no more his, then if it

Σχεπτιζόμενος ὁ πλοῦτος πέφυκε παραμύθειν, συνεχόμενος ἀλλοτρίων. Baſil. *M. Tum deeſt avaro quod habet, quàm quod non habet.*

ſtood growing in *Arabia* or *China*; he is no more owner of his Lands, then he is Maſter of *Jeruſalem*, or *Grand-Cairo*: for what difference is there, whether diſtance of place or baſeneſs of mind ſever things from him? whether his own heart, or another man's hand detain them from his uſe? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpoſe? whether one is a beggar out of neceſſity, or by choice? is preſſed to want, or a Volunteer thereto? Such an one may fancy himſelf rich, and others, as wiſe as himſelf, may repute him ſo; but ſo diſtracted perſons to themſelves and to one another do ſeem great Princes, and ſtile themſelves ſuch; with as much reaſon almoſt he might pretend to be wiſe, or to be good. Riches are χρήματα; things whoſe nature conſiſts in uſefulneſs; abſtract that, they become nothing, things of no conſi-

deration

οὐ γὰρ χρήματα διὰ τοῦτο λέγεται, ἵνα κατορύξωμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα εἰς δέον αὐτοῖς χρησώμεθα. Chryſ. *in Mat. Or.* 49.

deration or value; he that hath them, is no more concerned in them then he that hath them not; it is the heart and skill to use affluence of things wisely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and constitutes him rich that hath it; otherwise the Chests may be cramm'd, and the Barns stuffed full, while the man is miserably poor and beggarly; 'tis in this sense true, which the Wise-man says, *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.* But the very having Riches (will such a man say) is matter of Reputation; men do esteem and honour him that hath them: true, if he knows how, and hath the mind to use them well, otherwise all the credit they yield consists in making their Master ridiculous to wise men, and infamous among all men: but, putting case that any should be so foolish as to respect us meerly for seeming rich, why should we accommodate our

Desunt inopi multa, avaro omnia. Sen. *Epist.* 108.

Prov. 13. 7.

practice to their vain opinion, or be baſe our ſelves becauſe others are not wiſe? But however, (may he ſay again) it is a pleaſant thing to ſee them; a heap of Gold is the moſt lovely ſpectacle that one can behold; it does a man's heart good to view an abundance of good things about him. For this plea indeed he hath a good Authour; this it ſhould ſeem was all the benefit the Wiſe-man obſerved in them, accruing to ſuch perſons:

Eccleſ. 5. 11. *What good,* ſaith he, *is there to the owners thereof, ſaving the beholding of them with their eyes?* But if this be all they are good for, it is, one would think, a very ſlim benefit they afford, little able to ballance the pain and care requiſite to the acquiſt and cuſtody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the Poſſeſſour, for any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleaſure may enjoy better ſights; all the Riches and

and Ornaments of Nature, the glorious ſplendours of Heaven, and the ſweet beauties of the Field, are expoſed to common view; the choiceſt Magnificencies and Gallantries of the World, do ſtudiouſly preſent themſelves to every man's eye; theſe in part every man truly may appropriate to himſelf; and by imagination any man can as well take all that he ſees for his own, as the tenacious Miſer doth fancy his dear pelf to be his.

But mine Heir (perhaps he will farther ſay) will thank me, will praiſe me, will bleſs me for my great care and providence: If he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee; thou ſhalt not hear what he ſays, or feel any good from what he does: And moſt probably thou art miſtaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou *knoweſt not who* he ſhall be, Pſal. 39. 6.

that ſhall gather all thou heapeſt up, or *ſhall rule over all thy labour,* Eccleſ. 2. 19. (*whether he ſhall be a wiſe man or a fool,* a kinſman or a ſtranger, a friend or a foe) ſo thou canſt as little gueſs what he will think or ſay: If he hath wit, he may ſweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wiſedom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy diſgrace ſpend what thou leaveſt, as vainly as thou didſt get or keep it. But (this to be ſure he will in the end ſay for himſelf) Money is a good reſerve againſt neceſſary occaſions, or bad times that may come; againſt the time of old age, of ſickneſs, of adverſity; 'tis the ſureſt friend a man can have in ſuch caſes, which, when all fails, will be Prov. 10. 15. ready to help him: *The rich man's Wealth is his ſtrong City*; the Wiſeman he thinks never ſpake more wiſely; he therefore will not diſmantle this fortreſs, but will keep

it

it well ſtored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and uſeleſs by him: but (to let paſs now the prophane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and ſubſtituting our providence in the room of his) what a folly is it, thus to anticipate evil, and to create to our ſelves a preſent adverſity from a ſuſpicion of one future; to pinch our ſelves now, leſt we ſhould ſuffer hereafter; to pine to day, becauſe we can imagine it poſſible that we may ſtarve to morrow; to forego certain occaſions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the like occaſions may happen one day, we know not when; not to uſe things now, when reaſon bids us, becauſe they may be uſefull at another time? Not conſidering alſo, that many intervenient accidents, more probably then a moderate and handſom uſe of our Wealth, may crop the excreſcencies thereof.

2. But ſetting aſide theſe abſurd excuſes of penuriouſneſs, we may conſider, that ſecluding the good uſe of them in beneficence, Riches are very impertinent, very cumberſom, very dangerous, very miſchievous things; either ſuperfluous toys, or troubleſome clogs, or treacherous ſnares, or rather all theſe in combination, productive of trouble, ſorrow, and ſin. A ſmall pittance will, and muſt ſuffice to all reaſonable purpoſes, to ſatisfy our neceſſities, to procure conveniencies, to yield innocent delight and eaſe: our nature doth not require, nor cannot bear much: (*Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*, ſaith our Lord, *for a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth*; that is, a man may live well without it:) all the reſt, ſetting beneficence apart, can onely ſerve vanity or vice, will make us really fools or ſlaves. (*They that will*

Luk. 12. 15. 1 Tim. 6. 8. *Corporis exigua deſideria ſunt; frigus ſubmovere vult, alimentis famem ac ſitim extinguere; quicquid extra concupiſcitur, vitiis, non uſibus laboratur.* Sen. *Conſ. ad Helv.* 9.

be

be rich, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *fall into temptations and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtfull luſts, which drown men into deſtruction and perdition.*) They puff up our minds with vain and falſe conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or frenzy, to take our ſelves for other perſons, more great, more wiſe, more good, more happy then we are: for conſtantly, as the Wiſe-man obſerved, *The rich man is wiſe in his own conceit*; *Great men are not always wiſe.* And *Agur* thus intimates in his prayer, *Remove far from me vanity and lies, give me neither poverty nor riches.* They render us inſenſible and forgetfull of God, of our ſelves, of piety and virtue, of all that is good and worthy of us: (*Leſt I be full,* ſaid that good man again, aſſigning a reaſon why he deprecated being rich, *and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord?*) they ſwallow up our thoughts, our affections, our endea-

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Prov. 28. 11.

Job 32. 9.

Prov. 30. 8.

Prov. 30. 9.

endeavours, our time and leisure, possessing our hearts with a doting
Matt. 6. 24. love unto them, (excluding other
Eccles. 31. 1. good affections) distracting our minds with anxious cares about
Matt. 13. 22. them, (choaking other good thoughts) encumbring all our life
Luke 10. 41. with business about them, (incon-
2 Tim. 2. 4. sistent with due attention to our other more weighty and necessary concernments) filling our heads
1 Tim. 6. 10. with suspicions, and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and sorrows; they immerse our souls in all the follies of pride, in all
Jam. 5. 5. the filths of luxury, in all the
Luk. 16. 19. mischiefs emergent from sloath
1 Tim. 6. 10. and stupidity; they are *the root of all evils* unto us, and the greatest obstructions of our true happi-
Matt. 19. 23, 24. ness, rendring Salvation almost impossible, and Heaven in a manner inaccessible to us: so that to be rich, (if severed from a sober mind, and a free heart) is a great disease, and the source of many grievous

grievous diſtempers both of body and mind; from which we cannot well otherwiſe ſecure or reſcue our ſelves, then by liberally ſpending them in works of Bounty and Mercy: ſo ſhall we eaſe our ſelves of the burthens, ſo ſhall we elude the temptations, ſo ſhall we abandon the vices, and ſo ſhall we eſcape all the ſad miſchiefs incident to them: Thus to uſe wealth, ſhall turn it into a convenience, and an ornament of our lives, into a conſiderable bleſſing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this uſe of wealth, or abſtracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitifull and deſpicable then it; it is but like the load, or the trappings of an Aſs; a wiſe man on that condition would not chuſe it, or endure to be peſtered with it; but would ſerve it, as thoſe Philoſophers did, who flung it away, that it might not diſturb their contem-

ἀποφόρτισαί τι τῆς ὑψὸς, ἵνα πέλης κουφότερος. Naz. *Orat.* 27.

† Μηδὲ νόμιζε τῷ ἐλεημοσύνῃ ἀνάλυμα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ θησαυρόν, μηδὲ δαπάνην, ἀλλὰ πραγματείαν, μείζω δὲ λαμβάνειν. ἢ δίδως, &c. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *p.* 208.

templations: 'tis the power it affords of benefiting men, which onely can ſeaſon, and ingratiate it to the reliſh of ſuch a perſon; otherwiſe it is evidently true, which the Wiſe-man affirms, *Prov.* 15. 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, then great treaſure, and trouble therewith.*

* Μὴ πίνων φειδώμεθα χρημάτων, μᾶλλον δὲ φειδώμεθα τῶν χρημάτων. ὁ γὰρ φειδόμενος τῶν ὄντων εἰς τὰς τῶν πενήτων χεῖρας, αὐτὰ ἐναποτίθεται, εἰς ἣ ἀσυλον θησαυρὸν καὶ λῃστῶν καὶ οἰκετῶν καὶ συκοφαντῶν καὶ πάντων ἐφόδους ἀνάλωτον. Chryſ. *Tom.* 5. *Or.* 55.

3. Again, we may conſider, that to diſpenſe our Wealth liberally, is the beſt way to preſerve it, and to continue Maſters thereof; what we give, is not thrown away, but ſaved from danger; † while we detain it at home, (as it ſeems to us) it really is abroad, and at adventures; it is out at Sea, ſailing perilouſly in ſtorms, near rocks and ſhelves, amongſt Pirates; nor can it ever be ſafe, till it is brought into this port, or enſured this way; * when we have beſtowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unqueſtionable ſafety;

ſafety; in a place where no rapine, no deceipt, no miſhap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it. All our Doors and Bars, all our Forces and Guards, all the circumſpection and vigilancy we can uſe, are no defence or ſecurity at all in compariſon to this diſpoſal thereof: The poor man's ſtomach is a Granary for our Corn, which never can be exhauſted; the poor man's back is a Wardrobe for our Cloathes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's Pocket is a Bank for our Money, which never can diſappoint or deceive us; all the rich Traders in the World may decay and break, but the Poor can never fail, except God himſelf turn Bankrupt; for what we give to the Poor, we deliver and entruſt in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in Heaven, whither no thief can climb, where no moth or ruſt do abide.

Multi Sancti, & Sanctæ omnimodo caventes ipſas velut matres deliciarum divitias diſpergendo pauperibus abjecerunt, & tali modo in cœleſtibus theſauros tutius condiderunt. Aug. *Ep.* 121.

abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich; for God's Providence is his Estate; God's Wisedom and Power are his Defence; God's Love and Favour are his Reward; God's Word is his Assurance; who hath said it, that
Prov. 28. 27. *He which giveth to the poor, shall not lack:* no vicissitude therefore of things can surprize him, or find him unfurnished; no disaster can impoverish him, no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occa-
Isa. 32. 8. sions: He that *deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand,* (saith the Prophet.) But on the other hand, being niggardly is the likeliest course we can take to lose our Wealth and Estate; we thereby expose them to danger, and leave them defenceless; we subject them to the envious eye, to the slanderous tongue, to the ravenous

ravenous and insidious hand; we deprive them of Divine Protection, which if it be away, *The watchman waketh but in vain:* We provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the Talent from that unprofitable servant, who did not use it well. We do indeed thereby yield God just cause of War, and enmity against us; which being, *Omnia dat qui justa negat*; we do forfeit all to Divine justice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet possession of any thing, if we refuse to pay our due Tributes and Taxes imposed upon us by our Almighty Sovereign; if we live in such rebellion against his Authority, such violation of his right, such diffidence to his Word? No: *He that trusteth in his riches, shall fall, but the righteous shall flourish as a branch:* such is the difference between the covetous and the liberal in

Psal. 127. 1.

Prov. 11. 28.

in point of ſecurity and ſucceſs concerning their Eſtate.

Even according to the humane and ordinary way of eſteeming things, (abſtracting from the ſpecial Providence of God) the liberal perſon hath in conſequence of his bounty, more real ſecurity for his Wealth, then this World hath any other: He thereby gets an intereſt in the gratitude and affection of thoſe whom he obligeth, together with the good will and reſpect of all men, who are ſpectatours of his vertuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repoſitories to him of a treaſure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any miſchance ſhould arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiſerate him, every man would haſten to his ſuccour. As when a haughty, a greedy, or a gripple man do fall

fall into calamity or disgrace, scarce any one regardeth or pitieth him: Fortune deserting such a person carries all with it, few or none stick to him, his most zealous flatterers are commonly the first that forsake him, contempt and neglect are the onely adherents to his condition; that of the Wise-man appears verified, *He that hideth his eyes from the poor, shall have many a curse:* so the courteous and bountifull person, when Fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good will and esteem of men; all men, upon the accompts of honour and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favour him; even those, who before were strangers, become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him; it, in the common judgment of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer.

Miraris cum tu argento post omnia ponas, Si nemo praeferet quem non merearis amorem. Hor. *Serm.* 1. 1.

Prov. 28. 27.

4. Nay farther we may conſider, that exerciſing Bounty is the moſt advantagious method of improving and increaſing an Eſtate; but that being tenacious and illiberal, doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great encreaſe, is to ſow much: he that ſows little, how can he expect a good Crop? It is as true in ſpiritual Husbandry, as in the other; that *what a man ſoweth that he ſhall reap*, both in kind, and according to proportion: So that great Husband-man S. *Paul* aſſureth us, *He that ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap ſparingly; but he that ſoweth bountifully, ſhall alſo reap bountifully*: and *Solomon* means the ſame, when he ſaith, *To him that ſoweth righteouſneſs, ſhall be a ſure reward.* The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly; he that will not adventure any thing conſiderable, how can he think of a large return?

Gal. 6. 7, 8.

2 Cor. 9. 6, 10.

Prov. 11. 18.

turn? *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance, ſo ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy Preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine*, Prov. 3. 9, 10. 'Tis ſo likewiſe in the Evangelical Negotiations; if we put out much upon ſcore of Conſcience or Charity, we ſhall be ſure to profit much. Liberality is the moſt beneficial Traffick that can be; it is bringing our Wares to the beſt Market; it is letting out our Money into the beſt hands; we thereby lend our Money to God, who repays with vaſt Uſury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at preſent, and above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; ſo that if you will be Merchants this way, you ſhall be ſure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich moſt eaſily and ſpeedily: *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth ſhall be watered himſelf*: This is that which S. *Paul* again argues upon, Prov. 11. 25.

when commending the *Philippians* free kindness toward him, he says,
Phil. 4. 17. *Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your accompt.* Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies and abundantly turns to good accompt; it indeed procuring God's benediction, the fountain of all desirable plenty and prosperity: for,
Prov. 10. 22. *The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.* It is therefore the greatest want of policy, the worst ill-husbandry and unthriftiness that can be, to be sparing this way; he that useth it, cannot be thriving; he must spend upon the main stock, and may be sure to get nothing considerable. God ordinarily so proceeds, as to recompence and retaliate men in the same kind, wherein they endeavour to please him, or presume to offend him; so that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto will prosper

prosper their dealings, and bless their Estates: (*For this very thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto*, says *Moses*) but they who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himself in their success otherwise then to cross it, or (which is worse) to curse it: for if he seem to favour them for a time with some prosperity in their affairs, their condition is much worse thereby, their accompt will be more grievous, and their fate more disastrous in the end. Deut. 15. 10. Psal. 73. 17.

5. Farther, the contributing part of our goods to the poor, will qualify us to enjoy the rest with satisfaction and comfort. The Oblation of these First-fruits, as it will sanctify the whole lump of our Estate, so it will sweeten it; having offered this well-pleasing sacrifice of piety, having discharged this debt of justice, having paid

this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at reſt, and our conſcience well ſatisfied, we ſhall, like thoſe good people in the Acts, *eat our meat with gladneſs, and ſingleneſs of heart*; to ſee the poor man by our means accommodated, eaſed, and refreſhed, will give a delicious reliſh to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our Eſtate, ſo it will render the fruition thereof ſowre or unſavoury to us: for can we with any content taſte our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor man ſtands in ſight pining with hunger? Can we without regret ſee our Walls cloathed with Tapeſtry, our Horſes deckt with Golden Trappings, our Attendants ſtrutting in wanton Gaiety, while our honeſt poor Brother appears half naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furniſh ten poor people with neceſſaries,

Acts 2. 46.

Ἐγγὺς ὁ πένης, εἰς τοῦτον ἀπέρευξαί τι τῶν περιττῶν, τί καί σου κάμνεις ἀπεπτῶν, καὶ τοῦτ' πεινῶν, καὶ σὺ κραιπαλῶν καὶ τοῦτ' ὑδεριῶν, καὶ σὺ κάρῳ βαρύνων, καὶ τοῦτ' περιτρεπόμενος νόσῳ; Naz. *Or.* 27.

ries, and have the heart within us, without ſhame and diſpleaſure, to ſee them want? No; the ſenſe of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthineſs toward our Neighbour, will not fail (if ever we conſiderately reflect on our behaviour) to ſting us with cruel remorſe and ſelf-condemnation; the clamours of want and miſery ſurrounding us, will pierce our ears, and wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to baniſh them from our proſpect or regard, will ſo aſſail, and ſo purſue us, as to diſturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quaſh the briskneſs of our mirth, to allay the ſweetneſs of our pleaſure; yea rather, if ſtupidity and obduration have not ſeized on us, to imbitter all unto us; we ſhall feel that true, which *Zophar* ſpeaks of the cruel and covetous Oppreſ-

Job 20. 18, 20, 22. four, *Surely he ſhall not feel quietneſs in his belly, —he ſhall not rejoyce in his ſubſtance,—in the fullneſs of his ſufficiency he ſhall be in ſtraits.*

6. I ſhall touch but one conſideration more, perſwaſive of this practice; it is this: The peculiar nature of our Religion ſpecially requires it, and the honour thereof exacts it from us; nothing better ſuits Chriſtianity, nothing more graces it, then Liberality; nothing is more inconſiſtent therewith, or more diſparageth it, then being miſerable and ſordid. A Chriſtian Niggard is the verieſt nonſenſe that can be; for, What is a Chriſtian? What but a man, who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who repoſes all his truſt and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the moſt good and bountifull God, to follow, as the beſt pattern of his practice,

ſtice, the moſt benign and charitable *JESUS*, the Son of God; to obey the Laws of God, and his *Chriſt*, the ſum and ſubſtance of which is Charity; half whoſe Religion doth conſiſt in loving his Neighbour as himſelf? What is he farther, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleaſures of it; who profeſſes himſelf in diſpoſition and affection of mind to forſake all things for *Chriſt*'s ſake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under Heaven; having all his main concernments and treaſures, his heart, his hopes, and his happineſs in another world? Such is a Chriſtian; and what is a Niggard? All things quite contrary: One whoſe practice manifeſtly ſhews him to worſhip another thing beſide, and before God; to love Mammon above God, and more to confide in it, then in him; One who bears

ſmall

ſmall good will, kindneſs or pity toward his Brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celeſtial; whoſe mind and heart are rivetted to this world; whoſe hopes and happineſſes are ſetled here below; whoſe ſoul is deeply immerſed and buried in earth; One who, according to conſtant habit, notoriouſly breaketh the two great heads of Chriſtian duty, *Loving God with all his heart, and his Neighbour as himſelf*: It is therefore, by comparing thoſe things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile groſs contradictions and inconſiſtencies, if we profeſs our ſelves to be Chriſtians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the ſpecial grace and glory of our Religion, that it conſiſteth not in barren ſpeculations, or empty formalities, or forward profeſſions; not in fancying curiouſly, or ſpeaking zealouſly, or looking demurely; but in really producing ſenſible fruits

fruits of goodneſs; in doing (as S. *Paul* ſignifies) *things good and profitable unto men*, ſuch as thoſe chiefly are of which we ſpeak. The moſt gracious wiſedom of God hath ſo modelled our Religion, that according to it Piety and Charity are the ſame thing; that we can never expreſs our ſelves more dutifull toward him, or better pleaſe him, or more truly glorify him, then when we are kind and good to our poor Brother. We groſly miſtake, if we take giving of Alms to be a Jewiſh or Popiſh practice, ſuitable to Children and Dullards in Religion, beneath ſo refined, ſo improved, ſo loftily ſpiritual Gallants as we: No, 'tis a duty moſt properly, and moſt highly Chriſtian, as none more, a moſt goodly fruit of Grace, and a moſt faithfull mark thereof: *By the experiment of this miniſtration, we* (as S. *Paul* ſaith) *glorify God for our profeſſed ſubjection* Tit. 3. 8. 2 Cor. 9. 13.

tion unto the Goſpel of Chriſt, and for our liberal diſtribution unto our brethren and unto all men: without it our Faith is dead and ſenſeleſs; our high attainments are fond preſumptions; our fine notions and delicate ſpiritualities are in truth but ſilly dreams, the iſſues of a proud and ignorant fancy: he that appears hard-hearted and cloſe-fiſted towards his needy Brother, let him think or call himſelf what he pleaſeth, he plainly is no Chriſtian, but a blemiſh, a reproach, and a ſcandal to that honourable Name.

7. To all theſe Conſiderations and Reaſons inducing to the practice of this kind of Charity, I might ſubjoyn examples, and ſet before you the faireſt Copies that can be imagined thereof. We have for it the pattern of God himſelf, who is infinitely munificent and mercifull; *from whom every good and perfect gift deſcendeth; who giveth*

Jam. 1. 5, 17.
Acts 17. 25.

giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all; who *giveth liberally and upbraideth not.* We have 2 Cor. 8. 9.
the example of the Son of God, who out of pure charity did freely part with the riches and glories of Eternity, voluntarily embracing extream poverty and want for our ſake, that we who were poor, might be enriched; we that were miſerable, might become happy; who *went about doing good*; ſpent Acts 10. 38.
all his life in painfull diſpenſation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the bleſſed Patriarchs to follow, who at God's pleaſure and call did readily leave their Country, their Friends, their Goods, and all they had. We have the practice of the holy Apoſtles, who freely *let go all to follow their* Matt. 19. 27.
Lord; who chearfully ſuſtained all ſorts of loſſes, diſgraces and pains, for promoting the honour of God, and procuring good unto men;

We

we have to move and encourage us hereto the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who *so many as were possessours of lands and houses, did sell them*, and did impart the price of them to the community, *so that there was none poor among them*, and that *distribution was made to every one as he had need*. We have all the Saints and eminent servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderfull in the performance of these Duties. I could tell you of the blessed Martyr S. *Cyprian*, who was liberal by whole-sale, bestowing all at once, a fair Estate, on God and the poor; of the renowned Bishop S. *Basil*, who constantly waited on the sick, and kissed their sores; of the most pious Confessour S. *Martin*, who having but one Coat left, and seeing a poor man that wanted cloaths, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that *poor man*; and many like instances

Act. 4.34,35.

Pontius in vit. Cypr.

Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 40.

Sulp. Sever.

inſtances out of authentick Hiſtory might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation: I might alſo, to beget emulation and ſhame in us, repreſent exemplary practices of Humanity and Charity even in Jews, Mahometans and Pagans, (ſuch as in theſe cold days might paſs for more then ordinary among us) but I ſhall onely propound one preſent and ſenſible example, that of this Noble City, whoſe publick Bounty and Charity in all kinds, (in education of Orphans, in curing the Diſeaſed both in body and mind, in proviſion for the poor, in relieving all ſorts of neceſſities and miſeries) let me earneſtly intreat and exhort us all for God's ſake, as we are able, by our private Charity to imitate, to encourage, and to aſſiſt; let us doe this ſo much the more willingly and freely, as the ſad circumſtances of things, by God's judgments brought upon us, do plainly

ly require, that the publick Charity it ſelf (lying under ſo great impediments, diſcouragements and diſtreſſes) ſhould be ſupported, ſupplied, and relieved by particular Liberality. No words that I can deviſe will be ſo apt to affect and move you, as the caſe it ſelf, if you pleaſe to conſider it: hear it therefore ſpeaking, and, I pray, with a pious and charitable diſpoſition of mind attend thereto:

A true Report, &c.

For this excellent Pattern of pious Bounty and Mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God; let us humbly implore God's bleſſing on the future management of it; let us pay due reſpects to the worthy Promoters thereof, and pray for rewards upon them anſwerable to their charitable care and induſtry employed therein; let us alſo according to our ability per-

perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practice, give me leave briefly to reflect upon the latter part of my Text; which represents some instances of the felicity proper to a bountiful Person, or some rewards peculiar to the exercising the Duties of Bounty and Mercy.

The first is, *His righteousness endureth for ever.* These words are capable of various senses, or of divers respects; they may import that the fame and remembrance of his Bounty is very durable, or that the effects thereof do lastingly continue, or that eternal rewards are designed thereto; they may respect the bountifull man himself, or his posterity here; they may simply relate to an endurance in God's regard and care; or they may with that also comprehend a continuance in the good memory, and honourable mention

of men. Now in truth according to all theſe interpretations, the bountifull man's righteouſneſs doth endure for ever, that is, very laſtingly, (or ſo long as the ſpecial nature of the caſe doth bear) in any ſenſe; or for an abſolute perpetuity in ſome ſenſe: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without ſtraining involve ſo many truths, none of which therefore we think fit to exclude, but ſhall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame, (which that it in part is intended here, that which preceeds, *The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, doth argue) it is evident, that it peculiarly attends upon this practice: the bountifull perſon is eſpecially that Prov. 10. 7. *juſt* man, whoſe *memory is bleſſed*, (is μετ' ἐγκωμίων, as the Greek renders it; that is, is proſecuted with commendations and praiſes.) No Spices can ſo embalm a man,

no

no Monument can ſo preſerve his Name and Memory, as works of Beneficence; no other fame is comparably ſo precious, or truly glorious, as that which grows from thence: The Renown of Power and Proweſs, of Wit or Learning, of any Wiſedom or Skill, may dwell in the fancies of men with ſome admiration; but the remembrance of Bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial eſteem and affection; there erecting immoveable Trophies over Death and Oblivion, and it thence ſpreading it ſelf through the tongues of men with ſincere and ſprightly Commendations. The Bountifull man's very Duſt is fragrant, and his Grave venerable; his Name is never mentioned without reſpect; his Actions have always theſe beſt Echoes, with innumerable iterations reſounding after them: *His goods ſhall be eſtabliſhed, and the Congregation ſhall*

declare his Alms, Eccleſ. 32. 11. This was a true Friend to Mankind; This was a real Benefactour to the World; This was a Man good in earneſt, and pious to good purpoſe.

2. The effects of his righteouſneſs are likewiſe very durable: When he is departed hence, and in perſon is no more ſeen, he remains viſible and ſenſible in the footſteps and fruits of his goodneſs; the Poor ſtill beholds him preſent in the ſubſiſtence of himſelf, and his Family; the Sickman feels him in the refreſhment, which he yet enjoys by his proviſion; he ſupervives in the heart of the Afflicted, which ſtill reſents the comfort, and rejoyces in the eaſe which he procured him; all the World perceives benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his Example; Religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himſelf enjoyeth glory and praiſe

praiſe from his righteouſneſs.

3. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth in reſpect to his poſterity. It is an uſual plea for tenacity and parſimony, that care muſt be had of poſterity, that enough muſt be provided and laid up for the Family: But in truth this is a very abſurd excuſe, and doing according thereto, is a very prepoſterous method of proceeding toward that end; it is really the greateſt improvidence in that reſpect, and the trueſt neglect that can be of our Children: for ſo doing, together with a ſeeming Eſtate, we entail a real Curſe upon them; we deveſt them of God's protection and benediction, (the onely ſure preſervatives of an Eſtate) we leave them Heirs of nothing ſo much as of puniſhments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injuſtice both toward God and man: whereas by liberally beſtowing on

the Poor, we demiſe unto them God's bleſſing, which is the beſt inheritance; we recommend them to God's ſpecial care, which is the beſt tuition; we leave them God's protection and providence, which are a Wealth indefectible and inexhauſtible; we conſtitute God their Guardian, who will moſt faithfully manage, and moſt wiſely improve their ſubſtance, both that which we leave to them, and that which we gave for them to the Poor; we thereby in good part entitle them to the rewards appropriate to our pious Charity, our Faith, our Gratitude, our Self-denial, our Juſtice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of Bounty; to omit the honour and good will of men, which conſtantly adhere to the Bountifull man's Houſe and Family. *Prov.* 13. 22. *A good man leaveth an inheritance to his childrens children.* It is therefore expreſly men-

mentioned in Scripture as a recompence peculiar to this Vertue, that ſecurity from want, and all happineſs do attend the poſterity of the Bountifull perſon: *He is ever mercifull and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed*, ſaith *David* of him generally; and *David* alſo particularly obſerved, that in all the courſe of his long life, he could find no exception to the Rule: *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread.* Pſal. 37. 25, 26. Pſal. 112. 2, 3.

4. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth for ever in the perpetual favour of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer upon him, who out of Conſcience and Reverence toward God, out of good will and kindneſs toward his Brother hath diſperſed, and given to the poor. *God will not* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *be unjuſt to forget his labour of charity in miniſtring* Heb. 6. 10.

ſtring to his poor Brother: from
Gal. 6. 8. the ſeed which he *hath ſown to the Spirit*, he ſhall aſſuredly reap a moſt plentifull Crop of Bleſſings ſpiritual; he ſhall effectually enjoy
1 Tim. 6. 19. *the good foundation* that he hath *ſtored up*: for the goods he hath ſold and delivered, he ſhall *bonâ*
Matt. 13. 46. *fide* receive his Bargain, *the hidden treaſure*, and *precious pearl* of eternal life; for this beſt improvement of his Talent of worldly Riches,
Matt. 25. 21, 26. he ſhall hear the *Euge bone ſerve, Well done good and faithfull ſervant, enter into thy Maſters joy*: he ſhall at laſt find God infinitely more bountifull to him, then he hath been unto the poor.

Thus when all the flaſhes of ſenſual pleaſure are quite extinct; when all the flowers of ſecular glory are withered away; when all earthly Treaſures are buried in darkneſs; when this world, and all the faſhion of it, are utterly vaniſhed and gone, the Bountifull man's

man's ſtate will be ſtill firm and flouriſhing, and *His righteouſneſs ſhall endure for ever.*

It follows, *His horn ſhall be exalted with honour:* A Horn is an Emblem of Power; for in it the Beaſts ſtrength, offenſive and defenſive, doth conſiſt; and of Plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of Sanctity, for that in it was put the holy Oyl, with which Kings were Conſecrated; and of Dignity, both in conſequence upon the reaſons mentioned, (as denoting might, and influence, and ſacredneſs accompanying Sovereign Dignity) and becauſe alſo it is an eſpecial beauty and ornament to the Creature which hath it; ſo that this expreſſion (*His Horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) may be ſuppoſed to import, that an abundance of high, and holy, of firm and ſolid honour ſhall attend upon the Bountifull perſon. And that

1 Sam. 16. 13.
1 Kings 1. 39.

that ſo it truly ſhall, may from many conſiderations appear.

1. Honour is inſeparably annexed thereto as its natural Companion and ſhadow. God hath impreſſed upon all Vertue a Majeſty and a Beauty, which do command reſpect, and with a kindly violence extort Veneration from men; ſuch is the natural Conſtitution of our Souls, that as our ſenſe neceſſarily liketh what is fair and ſweet, ſo our mind unavoidably will eſteem what is vertuous and worthy; all good Actions as ſuch, are honourable, but of all Vertues Beneficence doth with moſt unqueſtionable right claim honour, and with irreſiſtible force procures it; as it is indeed the moſt divine of Vertues, ſo men are moſt apt to venerate them, whom they obſerve eminently to practiſe it. Other Vertues men ſee, and approve as goodly to the ſight, but this they taſte and feel; this

Φιλῶνται σχεδὸν μάλιστα οἱ ἐλευθέστεροι τῶν ἐπ' ἀρετῆς, ὠφέλιμοι γὰρ. Ariſt.

this by most sensible experience they find to be pleasant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it. They, who *doe their alms before men*, although out of an unworthy vain-glorious design, *have* yet, as our Saviour intimates, *their reward*; they fail not to get Honour thereby; and even so have no bad penny-worth: for, in the Wise-man's judgment, *A good name is rather to be chosen then great riches*, they receive at least fine air for gross earth; and things very spiritual, for things most material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally desire and prize, for that which onely fashion in some places endeareth, and commandeth: they get the end for the means, for scarce any man seeketh wealth for it self, but either for Honour, or for Vertues sake, that he may live creditably, or may do good therewith: Necessity is served with a lit-

Matt. 6. 1.

Prov. 21. 21.

Ἁι γὰρ δυναστεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἐστιν αἱρετά. Arist.

a little, Pleaſure may be ſatisfied with a Competence; Abundance is required onely to ſupport Honour, or promote good; and Honour by a natural connexion adhereth to Bounty. *He that followeth after righteouſneſs and mercy, findeth life, righteouſneſs, and honour*, Prov. 21. 21.

2. But farther, an acceſſion of Honour according to gracious promiſe, (grounded upon ſomewhat of ſpecial reaſon, of equity and decency in the thing it ſelf) is due from God unto the Bountifull perſon, and is by ſpecial providence ſurely conferred on him. There is no kind of Piety, or inſtance of obedience, whereby God himſelf is more ſignally honoured, then by this. Theſe are chiefly thoſe *good works*, the which *men ſeeing*, are apt to *glorify our Father which is in Heaven*; Phil. 1. 11. *Being filled with the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are by Chriſt Jeſus, to the glory,*

Matt. 5. 16.

glory, and praiſe of God. To theſe fruits that is moſt applicable, which our Lord ſaith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit:* for, as, *He that oppreſſeth the poor, reproacheth his Maker;* ſo *he honoureth him, that hath mercy on the poor.* The comfortable experience of good in this ſort of actions, will moſt readily diſpoſe men to admire and commend the excellency, the wiſedom, the goodneſs of the Divine Laws, will therefore procure God hearty praiſe, and thanks for them: For, as S. *Paul* teacheth us, *The adminiſtration of this ſervice not onely ſupplyeth the want of the Saints, but is abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God; whilſt by experiment of this miniſtration, they glorify God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the Goſpel of Chriſt, and for your liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all men.* Since then God is ſo peculiarly honoured by this practice, it

Joh. 15. 8.

Prov. 14. 31.

2 Cor. 9. 11, 12, 13.

is

is but equal and fit, that God ſhould remunerate it with honour; God's noble goodneſs will not let him ſeem defective in any ſort of beneficial correſpondence toward us, we ſhall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which he will not be more apt to render us in Grace; they who (as *Solomon* ſpeaketh) *honour God with their ſubſtance*, ſhall by God certainly be honoured with his bleſſing: Reaſon intimates ſo much, and we beſide have God's expreſs Word for it; *Them* (ſaith he) *who honour me, I will honour.* He that abſolutely and independantly is the Fountain of all Honour, *from whom* (as good King *David* ſaith) *riches and honour cometh*, for that *he reigneth over all*, he will aſſuredly prefer and dignify thoſe, who have been at ſpecial care and coſt to advance his Honour. He that hath the *hearts of all men in his hands*, and *faſhioneth them* as he

Prov. 3. 9.

1 Sam. 2. 30.

1 Chron. 29. 12.

Prov. 21. 1.

Pſal. 33. 15.

he pleaſeth, will raiſe the bountifull man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and diſpoſeth ſucceſs as he thinks fit, will cauſe the Bountifull perſon's Enterprizes to proſper, and come off with credit. He will not ſuffer the reputation of ſo real an Honourer of himſelf to be extreamly ſlurr'd by diſaſter, to be blaſted by ſlander, to be ſupplanted by envy or malice; but will *bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day.* Pſal. 37. 6.

3. God will thus exalt the Bountifull man's Horn even here in this World, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future ſtate: He ſhall there be ſet at the right-hand, in a moſt honourable place and rank; among the chief Friends and Favourites of the Heavenly King; in happy Conſortſhip with the holy Angels, and bleſſed Saints; where, in recompence

pence of his pious Bounty, he shall from the bountifull hands of his most gracious Lord receive *an incorruptible Crown of Righteousness*, and *an unfading Crown of Glory*: The which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord; to whom for ever be all praise. *AMEN.*

Heb. 13. 20. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Bloud of the Everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work to doe his Will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* AMEN.

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A Sermon on the *Passion of our Blessed Saviour*; Preached before the *Lord Mayor* at *Guild-hall Chappel*, on Good-Friday, 1677.

FINIS.